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The Simple Life



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BY
JOHN C. TRAVIS.

THE
SIMPLE LIFE

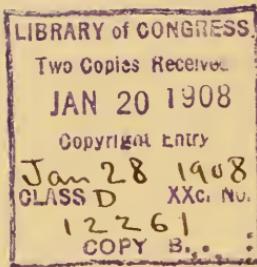
AN AMERICAN PLAY

IN FOUR ACTS

John C. Tolson

1908

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PEEKSKILL, N. Y.
THE HIGHLAND DEMOCRAT PRINT.
1908.

CHARACTERS.

JOHN HERINGTON, *U. S. Senator for Dakota*;—*Eastern born*;—*a self made man*;—age 38.

GEORGE BARWELL, JR., *a cosmopolitan*;—*iron grey moustache*;—*jet black hair*;—age 40.

RICHARD BARWELL, *his youthful half-brother*;—*a Senior at college*;—age 21.

GERARDUS CARTER, *a young-old chap of the club type*;—*hair dyed*;—*youthful clothing*;—age 55.

JIMMY WILLIAMS, *plump man about town*;—age 35 to 40.

GEORGE BARWELL, SR., *a hard-headed American capitalist*.

JUDGE PLATT, *father of Mildred Barwell*;—*a benign country jurist*;—*closely trimmed white-beard*.

BARON ERNST VON ULM, *German financial agent*.

FRANCISCO EMILIO SERRANO, *oily Spanish-American*;—age 25.

KELLY, *valet to George Barwell, Jr.*

ROBERTS, *the Carter's butler*;—*grey haired, but not decrepit*.

MADGE CARTER, *steady going brunette*;—age 28.

POLLY CARTER, *her sister, aged 17 years and 8 months*.

MILDRED BARWELL, *wife of George Barwell, Jr.*

SCENES.

ACT I.

*Morning room at the Carter's, Forty-eighth Street,
near Fifth Avenue. Time 9.30 A. M.*

ACT II.

The same. Time 1.40 P. M.

ACT III.

*Library of George Barwell, Jr., around the corner
from the Carter house. Time 4.45 P. M.*

ACT IV.

The same. Time 10 P. M.

The action of the Play takes place on a Saturday in December, beginning at 9.30 A. M. and ending at 10.30 P. M.

Time—The Present.

Place—New York.

FIRST ACT.

THE SIMPLE LIFE.

ACT I.

SCENE: *Morning room at the Carter's, Forty-eighth Street, between Fifth and Madison Avenues, New York City. Door R. I. E. leading to dining room. Door R. C. leading to hall. Window L. C. Conservatory arch set on the oblique L.*

TIME: 9.30 Saturday morning, December, 1907.

DISCOVERED: *Carter, running through his mail. He is a young man of 55, red tie, fancy waistcoat, spats, etc. Enter R. I. E. Polly Carter.*

POLLY. Good morning, papa.

CARTER. [Confidential] Polly, I can name a stock that will positively advance five points within the next forty-eight hours.

POLLY. You always talk that way, papa.

CARTER. [Earnest] This is no speculation, my dear, but a moral certainty. If Madge would advance, say five hundred, on account of my January allowance—

POLLY. [Laughing] Go in and breakfast, father. It is half-past nine.

CARTER. I've had my coffee. [Wise look] That will be all this morning, thank you.

POLLY. Late supper again?

CARTER. Nothing to speak of, Polly. A rarebit

and some broiled kidneys at the Club.

POLLY. [Smiling reproof] Naughty young man!

CARTER. [Jauntily twirling moustache] Respect my four grey hairs, if you please.

[Enter R. C. ROBERTS with cards.]

ROBERTS. The gentlemen have an appointment, sir.

CARTER. [Surprised] With me? [Reads cards] Baron Ernst Von Ulm? Francisco Emilio Serrano? Who the deuce are they?

POLLY. [Teasing] Careful, Dad. It may be a brace of duns.

CARTER. [Nervous] Do you think so? [Regains courage] No, no, show them in Roberts. [Exit R. C. ROBERTS.] My creditors have long been distinguished by their exemplary patience.

POLLY. [Going] All right, Daddy. Sing out, if you need help.

[Exit R. C. POLLY, meeting VON ULM and SERRANO in C. The latter eyes her admiringly.]

VON ULM. [Coming down] A crisp December morning! I present my business associate, Senor Serrano, whom you expressed a desire to meet.

CARTER. [Blank astonishment, mechanically shakes hands with SERRANO] Very pleased, I am sure.

SERRANO. [Fawning] Thank you.

CARTER. [Puzzled, to Von Ulm] Your face is vaguely familiar. Would you mind telling me when it was that I expressed a desire to meet your friend?

VON ULM. Last evening, at your club. Have you no recollection of eating supper?

CARTER. [Hand on forehead] I have.

VON ULM. [Growing impatient] I sat next you at table. We engaged in a protracted discussion of the merits of the enterprise in which I have the good fortune to be engaged.

CARTER. [Still doubtful] And I requested you to call here this morning?

VON ULM. [Assenting] To present myself, my associate and to lay before you our plans. For your part, you pledged yourself to summon to this conference the presidents of four of New York's most powerful financial institutions.

CARTER. [Aside] I wonder why I limited myself to four? [Aloud] Be seated, gentlemen?

[All sit—CARTER in C.]

VON ULM. [Impressively] I represent certain influential German interests. Senor Serrano is nephew to his Excellency, the President of the Republic of Guatama. Does that refresh your memory?

CARTER. [Vague] Some South American scheme, was it not?

SERRANO. [Explosively] We shall make of you a millionaire!

CARTER. That sounds promising. There is always room for one more millionaire—

VON ULM. [Important] He, you and I go in on the ground floor.

CARTER. Fact is, gentlemen, very little capital is at present at my disposal.

SERRANO. You are widely acquainted?

CARTER. Anyone will tell you that Gerardus Carter knows everybody in town.

VON ULM. [Respectfully] Last evening you addressed a Cabinet officer by his first name.

CARTER. Pshaw, that's nothing. [Aside] After supper.

VON ULM. Inquiry satisfies us that you are the man we seek. [Confidentially] The adventure, you understand, is not in the nature of a speculation.

CARTER. [Face falls] Dear me, is this another moral certainty?

SERRANO. [Exaggerated] The returns will be enormous! [Explains] Von Ulm, a German subject, purchases three million of disputed claims against the former government of Guatama.

VON ULM. [Dignified] For which my people authorize me to pay as high as ten cents on the dollar—

CARTER. [Surprised] That means a risk of thousands.

VON ULM. [Indulgent smile] My principals control millions.

SERRANO. [Naively] There is no risk! My distinguished uncle is head of the present government of Guatama. The Treasurer of Gutama will liquidate these claims, if properly presented. I am the Treasurer.

VON ULM. [Quietly] Payment of my claims having been demanded, through a German banking house, in exceptionally good standing with the Imperial Ministry—

SERRANO. My uncle will at first decline to recognize their validity. Ha! Ha! Ha!

VON ULM. Whereupon a German gunboat makes its appearance upon the placid waters of Guatama, clears for action, and threatens to bombard the capital, if payment be not immediately forthcoming.

SERRANO. As a consequence, my uncle protests by cable to the great powers and [Winks] before their replies can be received, yields to this overwhelming display of brute force, and compromises at not less than fifty cents on the dollar.

VON ULM. [Impressively to CARTER] Meanwhile your government does not interfere. You must find a means of reaching the proper person.

CARTER. Before my wife died, I took an occasional flyer, but nothing like this. I feel flattered, gentle-

men, deeply grateful and all that sort of thing, but I wouldn't touch the proposition with a ten-foot pole.

SERRANO. [Rising, disgusted] Ah! Come, Von Ulm.
VON ULM. [Rising] We lose our time.

CARTER. [Politely] If there is anyone to whom I can give you a letter of introduction?

VON ULM. [Significantly] Ah! You would prefer to have us deal with——?

CARTER. [Ponders] Wilson? Bronson? Barwell? George Barwell is the man. Know him? [Sits at table.]

VON ULM. No.

SERRANO. He is discreet?

CARTER. Eminently so—well connected—widely acquainted—has what you might call a Standard Oil conscience—father head of a great corporation. I'll give you a line. [Writes] George is a born speculator! Would sell his reputation short, if he could find a purchaser. There! [Hands note to VON ULM] I won't detain you, gentlemen. Good morning. [Enter R. C. ROBERTS, showing in DICK. ROBERTS shows out R. C. VON ULM and SERRANO.] [Aside] Ah me, does it pay to be good?

DICK. [To CARTER] It's rather an early hour to expect to find Polly at home, sir. Fact is, I am just down from the University.

CARTER. Tut, tut, don't apologize. How is your father?

DICK. The governor is a victim of rheumatism this winter.

CARTER [Grinning complacently] Failing, eh? To think, he and I were once of an age. [Going, jauntily.] Well, good luck, my boy.

[Enter R. ROBERTS, ill at ease.]

DICK. Good morning, sir. [Exit R. C. CARTER.] [DICK comes down] What is it, Roberts?

ROBERTS. Miss Polly begs to be excused, Mr. Richard.

DICK. [Astounded] Begs to be excused! Is Miss Polly ill?

ROBERTS. [Sympathy] Never better, sir. It ain't that.

DICK. [Incredulous] Miss Polly declines to see me?

ROBERTS [Evasive] I was bidden to say, sir, that Miss Polly begs to be excused.

[POLLY bounces in R.]

POLLY. But that was not my message, Dicky. You may thank Madge for this delicate attention. [Laughing] I came down the back way.

DICK. [Laughs boyishly] It's all right, Polly, so long as you are neither ill nor angry. [L. of ROBERTS.] Loaf about the hall, Roberts, like a good chap—

POLLY [R. of ROBERTS] And give a signal, should sister start downstairs.

ROBERTS. [Twinkle in eyes] If I cough like this [gives eccentric wheeze] it means someone is coming. [Exit R. C. ROBERTS.]

POLLY. [Throwing herself in DICK's arms] Dick, my sweetheart, are we really and truly engaged?

DICK. [Arm around her] It looks very much that way. [Stroking her hair] Poor child, such a husband. Cash on hand, less than ten dollars: liabilities at the university too numerous to mention and too unpleasant to dwell upon.

POLLY. [Loyally] I want you just as you are, Richard, debts, troubles and all.

DICK. I am yours, my dear, never fear, but [fiercely] are you surely mine? Madge will move heaven and the other place to part us.

[ROBERTS coughs off R. C. They do not hear him.]

POLLY. [Chuckles] Madge complains that I see entirely too much of you.

DICK. [Good humoredly] Madge doesn't know what she is talking about. [Briskly] Look here, Polly, where shall we meet this afternoon?

POLLY. Saturday? Take me to a matinee.

DICK. I'll do it. [Face clouded] Can you dodge Madge?

[ROBERTS coughs off R. C. They do not hear him.]

POLLY. I'll telephone Jimmy Williams to come and take her out of our way. Jimmy will do anything to oblige me.

[Enter R. C. ROBERTS, hastily.]

ROBERTS. [Hoarse whisper] Children, children, I coughed twice. Mr. Williams is here.

POLLY. Good!

DICK. [Anxiously] He may tell Madge that I have seen you.

POLLY. If he does, I'll make the house too hot to hold him, hereafter.

[Enter R. C. JIMMY WILLIAMS.]

J. W. [At door to ROBERTS] Thank you. [Exit R. C. ROBERTS.] [Coming down] My dear Polly, fresh as ever.

POLLY. Really, Mr. Williams!

J. W. Blooming as ever,—shall we say? How do, Richard? I presume it is my duty to seize you as contraband of war and deliver you up to the properly constituted authority [points overhead].

POLLY. [Severely] I see nothing to laugh at. Madge is rapidly becoming a confirmed old maid.

J. W. You really can't lay that at my door, you know.

POLLY. Do me a favor?

J. W. With all my heart.

POLLY. Get Madge out of the way, after lunch.

Dick is taking me to the play.

J. w. [Doubtfully] Just where is "out of the way" located from your point of view?

POLLY. Dick must get seats for the new musical comedy, "The Peer and the Poodle." You may take Madge anywhere else.

J. w. Thank you.

[ROBERTS coughs off R. C.]

DICK. [Alarmed] She's coming.

J. w. [Nervously to POLLY] Tell me what to say.

POLLY. Slip into the conservatory, Dick. [DICK X. L.] Don't make any breaks, Mr. Williams. Dick is not here and you have not seen me this morning. [Exit L. POLLY and DICK.]

J. w. [Uneasily] Quite so. I should be just as well pleased had no one seen me here this morning. [Enter R. C. MADGE.] [Awkwardly] How do you do? Been here long? I mean, I haven't been kept waiting, thank you. Don't offer any excuses.

MADGE. [Shaking hands] I thought I heard Polly's voice.

J. w. [Flurried] Polly's voice? Of course. [Looks behind sofa, etc.] When did you last hear it?

MADGE. [Sits] How are you to-day?

J. w. Thank you, exceedingly fit. Let me see, I had some object in coming here.

MADGE. [Smiling] I hope so, I am sure.

J. w. [Annoyed at himself, explains] This business about the theatre has quite driven everything out of my head.

MADGE. [Naturally] What business about the theatre?

J. w. Now, I recollect. My sister begged me to look in and say—— What was her message?—— Something about Bridge—— However, it's of no consequence, as I have promised to—that is, I am to

have the pleasure of—— Botheration, Madge, suppose we go to the play this afternoon.

MADGE. That will be very nice.

J. W. What would you like to see?

MADGE. By all means, the new musical piece.

J. W. [Thoughtlessly] "The Peer and the Poodle"? [She assents.] They tell me it's deucedly good. [Catching himself] No, no, what am I saying? That play is barred—er—that is to say, it's a beastly thing—vulgar and broad—scarcely a line in the text to which a self-respecting woman should listen.

MADGE. How very odd. Several of my girl friends find nothing to criticise.

J. W. [Floundering] So many women, nowadays, strain at a gnat in the drawing room and swallow a camel at the theatre, don't you think?

MADGE [Waiving the point] As you please. I have seen everything else worth seeing.

J. W. Most provoking. [Aside] Confound those children.

[ROBERTS enters R. C. bearing card.]

MADGE. [Glancing at card] Of all men!

J. W. [Jealous] Rather an early hour to call, don't you think? [Going.]

MADGE. Don't go, Jimmy. It is George Barwell. Wait in the conservatory. [Exit R. C. ROBERTS.]

J. W. [Mindful of DICK and POLLY] I don't wish to wait in the conservatory. Two is company: three is a nuisance.

MADGE. Jimmy, I shall be very angry if you so much as hint that I desire a tête-a-tête with George Barwell.

J. W. [Despair] Whichever way I turn, I am literally the odd man. [Exit L.]

[ROBERTS shows BARWELL in R. C. and exits.]

BAR. Good morning, Madge.

MADGE. Good morning, *Mr.* Barwell.

BAR. [Shrug] Good morning, *Miss* Carter. I must apologize,—

MADGE. [Coldly] No apology is necessary.

BAR. Has Mildred been here?

MADGE. Frequently.

BAR. This morning?

MADGE. No.

BAR. Do you know where she is to be found?

MADGE. If I knew, you would be the last person to whom I should impart the information.

BAR. [Shrug] When I came down to breakfast, birdie had flown. I can't get a da—, a solitary syllable out of her maid.

MADGE. [Scornfully] So you interrogate your servants on the subject of your wife's whereabouts?

BAR. Last evening, having no engagement out, her royal highness favored me with a brilliant pyrotechnical display at home—

MADGE. Richly deserved, no doubt.

BAR. Possibly. I am mortal, hence frail. [Explaining] When I came home at ten o'clock—

MADGE. [Quickly] You returned home at ten o'clock? You had a guilty conscience?

BAR. [Calmly] Not I! When I have a guilty conscience, I don't go home at all. [Continues] Mildred's recriminations were based upon the alleged occurrences at a certain supper.

MADGE. There were queer people present?

BAR. [Easily] There are queer people present at a great many suppers. The men were all right.

MADGE. [Coldly] The men are invariably all right.

BAR. [Annoyed] Right or wrong, I am damned tired of Mildred's airs and graces.

MADGE. Stop swearing in my presence. I am not your wife.

BAR. True : things might be worse. When I married, I was in love.

MADGE. Do you happen to recall with whom?

BAR. With the woman who is my wife. I am in love with her at this moment.

MADGE. [Sneer] After your own peculiar fashion.

BAR. [Dogged] It is the truth. Mildred is the handsomest woman in New York and the wittiest, but she never chooses to exert herself to *amuse me*. At home, madam is normally in a state of prostration bordering upon collapse. [Bitterly] Home ! My home has become a mere dressing room in which the lady changes her costume.

MADGE. [Haughtily] This, by way of excusing yourself for the company you keep ?

BAR. This by way of explanation. Mildred and I have reached the parting of the ways. Let her return to her venerable papa.

MADGE. It would be the refinement of cruelty to ask a woman of Mildred's temperament to go back and live in a quiet country town.

BAR. She can't remain here. If you must have the truth, I am flat broke. The old man and I haven't passed the time of day since I got caught in the street last year and had to sell my seat.

MADGE. [Interested] What is to become of you?

BAR. [Cynic] What difference does that make? As a lost resource, I start for Washington this afternoon to apply for a berth in the diplomatic service. I have a record that entitles me to recognition. I was a Rough Rider, you know.

MADGE. [Tentatively] While you are out of the country, let Mildred quietly secure a divorce.

BAR. [Snaps] She might marry again.

MADGE. Suppose she does?

BAR. [Jealous] If Mildred divorces me and re-

marries, I'll kill the man.

MADGE. Did you come here to issue silly threats?

BAR. [Blandly] True: we digress. Directly she walks herself into a suitable frame of mind, Mildred will come here to be petted. Ask her to ring me up at the house.

MADGE. So it is money?

BAR. [Wearily] In this benighted town, is it ever anything else? I must have a few dollars in my pocket while pulling wires in Washington. Mildred can't employ her money to better advantage. Should I secure an appointment, I leave the country and the domestic atmosphere is cleared. [Going, gets whiff of cigarette smoke from conservatory and comes down again.] Among other accomplishments, Mildred has learned to smoke. Do you approve?

MADGE. [Loyal to her friend] I do not smoke.

BARWELL. Do you smell that?

MADGE. [Reluctantly] Yes.

BAR. Is it unreasonable to assume that Mrs. Barwell is now enjoying an after-breakfast cigarette in your conservatory, or——?

MADGE. [Angrily] Search the conservatory, if you like. I have nothing to conceal.

BAR. [After a glance off L.] All right. Jimmy is above suspicion, but——

MADGE. [Angrily] But what? Don't smile in that offensive manner.

BAR. [Going] It might be well to caution the innocent Williams not to gamble with my kid brother. [Exit R. C.]

MADGE. [X rapidly to conservatory, looks off and calls] Polly, come here immediately. [Enter L. POLLY, affected bravado. DICK and J. W. sheepish.] [Angrily] Mr. Williams, you at least, are old enough to know better.

J. w. [Ruffled, counts change] One can't please everybody. I am losers three dollars and fifty cents.

MADGE. [To Dick] Must I tell you in so many words that your calls have become unnecessarily frequent?

POLLY. [Spunky] Half of this house belongs to me.

DICK. One moment, Polly. [To MADGE] Because I happen to be George Barwell's half-brother, you can see no good in me. Is that fair? George is George and I am Dick.

MADGE. And I am Polly's elder sister: to the best of my ability I take my mother's place. You are teaching Polly to act in an underhand manner. Your influence is bad. [Turning on J. w.] As for you——

J. w. [Politely] If you please. My turn next.

MADGE. I do not thank you for teaching my little sister to gamble.

J. w. [Indignant] Bless my soul, little sister is no novice. Give you my word, those two children put it up on me in a most brazen manner and won every toss.

DICK. [Aside to POLLY] One forty-five. Don't forget.

POLLY. [Nose in air] I may accompany Richard as far as the front door, I presume? [Sweeps off R. C. followed by DICK.]

MADGE. [Pained] This affair with Dick is becoming serious.

J. w. Serious, but transitory. Calf love is no more durable than calf boots. At the age of 18 I had loved and lost at least a dozen in batches of three or four at a time.

MADGE. [Smiling] Fickle Jimmy!

J. w. [Promptly seizes opportunity] That was twenty years ago. With age comes wisdom and stability. [Falls on knees] Oh, Madge——

MADGE. Don't be absurd, Jimmy. Someone is coming.

J. w. [On knees.] No, you don't. You have worked that dodge before. Madge, if I swear—
[ROBERTS shows in MILDRED R. C.] Oh, thunder!
[Looks for imaginary object under sofa.]

MADGE. [X to MILDRED] Mildred, my dearest.
[They embrace.]

J. w. [Pretends to find his own handkerchief under sofa] Ah, here it is.

MILDRED. [Wise smile] Yes, there it is.

MADGE. [To MILDRED] You will remain and lunch with me?

MILDRED. [Assenting] If I may have a bit of breakfast first. [Madge instructs ROBERTS, who exits R.]

J. w. This would seem to be my cue for a hasty exit.

MADGE. Get a ticket for Mildred, Jimmy, and come back at one o'clock.

J. w. [Annoyed] May I bring another man? There is only one of me, you know.

MILDRED. Thank you, I am in no mood to go to the play.

J. w. [Relieved] Thank you. [Bows] Ladies, I commend myself to your tender consideration. [Exit R. C.]

MADGE. Your husband has been here.

MILDRED. I met him at the corner.

MADGE. You refused him money, I hope?

MILDRED. [Indifferently] No. The cheque was ready for my signature. George is most thoughtful when his own interests are at stake.

MADGE. [Impatiently] Why do you part with your money?

MILDRED. In this instance, to rid myself of Mr.

Barwell's presence for a blessed forty-eight hours.

MADGE. But you can't afford such luxuries, Mildred. Last month you gave him more than a thousand dollars.

MILDRED. [Unconcernedly] Mother's little fortune is slowly melting away; however, sufficient unto—

MADGE. You reason like a child.

MILDRED. [Shrug] Or a gambler. Who knows? My luck may change. It has run all one way for a long time. [MADGE clasps her hand.] [Gratefully] Good old Madge. [Braces up and talks without thinking] I must confess, it would be an exhilarating experience to live with a man to whom one might look up as to a superior being.

MADGE. [Shocked] Mildred!

MILDRED. [Sad smile] Don't take me literally. I have no ambition either to poison my husband's coffee or to elope. Nine days out of ten, drifting with the current of events suits me perfectly; on the tenth day I regain my moral equilibrium for an instant, register my puny protest and relapse into supreme indifference to the decrees of Fate.

MADGE. I cannot bear to hear you talk like this. [Timidly] Why do you not seek relief?

MILDRED. [Nonchalantly] Divorce? Personally, I see no reason why such a marriage as mine should not be dissolved, but the publicity would break my dear old father's heart.

MADGE. Take him into your confidence; seek his advice—

MILDRED. No. He must be spared at any cost, and yet— [Giving way] Oh, my God, Madge, I have borne more than a decent woman should be called upon to endure.

[Enter R. ROBERTS.]

ROBERTS. Breakfast is served, ma'am.

MADGE. Come, Mildred. For the time-being, let us forget that such a creature as man exists.

MILDRED. [Trace of coquette showing] Forget the one thing that woman spends a lifetime in remembering?

[Exit R. MILDRED and MADGE.]

[As ROBERTS is about to follow, POLLY slips in R. C.]

POLLY. [Whispering] Hist! Roberts! Mr. Richard will stop for me at a quarter before two. Stand near the door and be careful not to let him ring the bell.

ROBERTS. [Prophetic grumble] Some fine day Miss Madge will turn me out bag and baggage.

POLLY. [Reassuring] Never mind, Roberts. When I am married, you shall come and live with me.

ROBERTS. [Sceptic] Fun and famine in a flat, eh?

POLLY. Roberts, you think of nothing but eating.

ROBERTS. Yes, Miss. I like to count on one square meal a day.

[Exit ROBERTS R. C.]

POLLY. [Aloud] Aren't servants eccentric? To worry so about his dinner, years in advance. I never give a thought to such things. [Ecstasy] I wonder what Dick likes for dinner. Snails, of course, and calves brains with brown butter sauce and all sorts of queer messy things. Such fun! A dear little kitchen, a dear little gas stove and er—and er—oh well, if it costs too much to get up meals at home, we can always dine out. There are lots of good restaurants.

[ROBERTS shows in HERINGTON R. C. and retires.]

HER. [Awkward at first] This should be Miss Polly Carter.

POLLY. [Conventional] I am sure we have met before.

HER. I rather think we have. You used to sit on my lap. [She frowns.] When I went West, Miss Polly, you were only eight years old.

POLLY. [Indifferently] Indeed.

HER. I am John Herington.

POLLY. [Faintly amused] Oh, you are that one?

HER. [Puzzled] I beg your pardon?

POLLY. You are the man out West, who sends Madge a thick letter every week.

HER. [Feels like an ass] We exchange letters occasionally.

POLLY. [Calmly] Letters! Volumes! What on earth do you find to put in them?

[Enter MADGE R.]

MADGE. [Cordially] I am so very glad to see you, Jack. When did you reach town?

HER. [Beaming] Last night. I am off again this afternoon.

MADGE. I won't hear of such a thing. You must arrange to stay over Sunday.

HER. Impossible. I am on my way through to Washington.

MADGE. But, Jack, I have promised to go to a matinee, to-day. We shall see nothing of one another.

POLLY. [Going] So very pleased to have met you again, Mr. Herington. [Exit R. C.]

HER. [To MADGE] Your sister didn't know me, after all these years. By Jove, Madge, it's a treat to set eyes on you again.

MADGE. Sit here, Jack, and tell me all about yourself.

HER. [Modestly] My letters have already told you everything worth telling.

MADGE. Do you know you write a bully letter?

HER. [Warming up] I wonder whether you will permit me to tell you how much I value your letters.

[She frowns] No? All right. Some other time, perhaps. [Drops back to friendly tone] I have carefully put away every line from your pen—dozens and dozens of letters during the past ten years. You people, here in the East, can scarcely appreciate how it gratifies a poor devil of a pioneer to receive a friendly word now and then from home.

MADGE. [Changes subject pointedly] Have they made you a judge yet, Jack?

HER. Me? [Quizzical glance] No such luck.

MADGE. [Fears she has hurt him] Never mind. Some day your merits will receive recognition. [Quizzing] Why are you not engaged, by this time, old man?

HER. [Quizzing in turn] Am I not engaged?

MADGE. [Dodging his eyes] Not to my knowledge—

HER. You should know. Possibly there has been some misunderstanding.

MADGE. [Smiling in spite of herself] Not on my part.

HER. [Warmth] Madge, you have permitted me to write you that my dearest ambition is to ask you to be my wife.

MADGE. [Quizzing in turn] Should a true friend do ought to discourage the ambition of a rising man?

HER. [Pressing forward] If I now put the question in due form?

MADGE. I shall promptly vote "no"—

HER. [Giving way for the moment] Whereupon I declare the motion lost. However, having cast your vote in the negative, under the rules it is your privilege at any time to move to reconsider.

MADGE. [Making grimace] Just wait until I do so, my dear sir. [Serious] Be rational, Jack, and stop this nonsense. No man shall even so much as men-

tion the word love to me until Polly is settled in a home of her own.

HER. Polly might make her home with us.

MADGE. In the West? Better consult Polly.

HER. [Seriously] Is her future all that separates us?

MADGE. I have not said that. As I have written, I am your well-wisher, your sincere friend. I have never asked myself whether I care more for you than for any one of several men. Indeed, I am by no means eager to marry. An old school chum of mine is enjoying an experience that does not encourage me to entrust my happiness to the mercy of any man. You knew her, I think; Mildred Platt that was.

HER. [Constrained] Yes. A most attractive girl—

MADGE. After you went West, she married a perfect brute.

HER. [Colorless] How unfortunate.

MADGE. However, if she listens to my advice, she will divorce him. Look here, Jack, what would you advise?

HER. I am not a divorce lawyer.

MADGE. Nor is Mildred a typical divorcee. The wrong is altogether on the other side.

HER. [Sternly] Tell her to remain with her husband.

MADGE. Don't talk like an old fogey. Is Mildred's life to be wrecked because she married a man, who has since gone to the dogs? Not fifteen minutes ago I said to her—

HER. [Reserved] You have seen her recently?

MADGE. She is breakfasting in the next room. [Coaxing] If Mildred consents to discuss her affairs with you, will you give her the benefit of your experience?

HER. [Reserved] Should your friend see fit to consult me professionally, I shall not refuse to advise her. [MADGE X to door R. and calls off]

MADGE. Mildred, won't you permit me to present someone whom you knew years ago?

HER. [Reserve ebbing] Don't give my name. Test her memory. [MILDRED in door R.]

MADGE. Do you remember Mr.—? [Steps aside.]

MILDRED. [Calm as a Summer's day, X and shakes hands with HERINGTON, using a good deal of side] I recall Mr. Herington very distinctly. [Politely insolent] Where have you been all these years?

HER. [Ill at ease] In the West.

MILDRED. The West is such a large place.

HER. I make my home in Dakota.

MADGE. [Significantly] One of the divorce States.

MILDRED. [Frivolous] How very convenient.

MADGE. Mrs. Barwell contemplates bringing an action for divorce.

MILDRED. [Trivial manner] My plans are quite unsettled. At present I am having so much trouble with my servants that everything else has become a matter of secondary importance— [Turns away from HERINGTON and meets BARWELL, who enters R. C.]

BAR. [In presence of outsider, assumes heavy domestic] My dear, I found this despatch waiting for you upon the hall table.

MILDRED. [Surprised] For me? [Takes despatch] Thank you.

BAR. [Jealous, attempts to look over her shoulder] Nothing unpleasant, I hope.

MILDRED. [Scanning contents, delighted] Father will spend Sunday with us.

BAR. [Correcting] With you, my angel—I shall be

out of town.

MILDRED. [Beaming] I am so glad.

BAR. [Growls] Are you?

MILDRED. [Timidly explains] Glad to have father with me during your absence, George.

BAR. [Placated] Oh!

MILDRED. [Turns hesitating from BARWELL to HERINGTON] Have you met Mr. Barwell——? [As she speaks HERINGTON turns full face towards BARWELL.]

BAR. [Recognizing HERINGTON, can't be too affable] My dear Senator, this is indeed a small world.

HER. [Official manner] I confess you have the advantage, sir.

BAR. [Ingratiating himself] I had the honor of meeting you last evening at your hotel.

HER. [Impassive] Indeed.

BAR. Our good friend Congressman Black took me to call upon you, directly you reached town.

HER. [Official bow] Ah yes! I recall the incident. [Turns away.]

MADGE. Jack, does he know what he is saying? Have they made you a Senator? Oh, Jack, you old fraud, I am so proud of you. [MADGE and HERINGTON confer.]

BAR. [Aside to MILDRED] Ask him to dinner. [Aloud] Dine with us to-night, Senator. You will enjoy meeting my father-in-law, a distinguished New England jurist.

HER. Unfortunately, at three o'clock I leave for Washington——

BAR. [Insistent] No, no, dine with us, Senator, and I'll go over with you on the midnight. I have arranged to spend several days in Washington pushing that little matter in which you were kind enough to display some interest last evening.

MADGE. [Pleading] Say yes, Jack, I'll rush home

directly after the matinee and give you the rest of the afternoon.

BAR. [*Aside to MILDRED, who is struggling against her own inclinations*] Don't be a damned snob. Ask the fellow to dinner. I can use him in my business. [*She looks wildly at her husband, perceiving the danger which confronts her.*]

MILDRED. [*Slowly approaching HERINGTON*] Perhaps, if Madge and Polly consent to join us, Senator Herington will—

HER. [*Unyielding*] I regret extremely—

MILDRED. [*Drawing near*] Oh but I shan't take no for an answer. Come to us quite informally. [*Drops voice to an aside, looking at him coquettishly*] Please Jack. [*HERINGTON gives a start as he catches the expression of her eye, for an instant checks himself, then slowly bows his acceptance.*]

BAR. [*Loud and discordant, up C.*] Good work!

CURTAIN.

SECOND ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE: *Same as Act I. On chair up stage is thrown Madge's street wrap.*

TIME: *About 1.40 P. M. same day as Act I.*

DISCOVERED: *Roberts showing in J. W. R. C.*

J. w. [Briskly] Better late than never, Roberts.

ROBERTS. Yes, sir; luncheon was served a good half hour ago.

[POLLY rushes in R.]

POLLY. [Indignantly] As usual, behind time!

J. w. [Placating] My dear girl——

[Exit R. ROBERTS.]

POLLY. It will be your fault if Dick runs into Madge.

J. w. Trust me to bolt my lunch in the most obliging fashion.

POLLY. If you can't eat enough during the next ten minutes, go out between the acts and buy a sandwich.

J. w. [Placid grin] Madge doesn't permit me to go out between the acts.

[MADGE, wearing hat, appears in doorway R.]

MADGE. Come, Jimmy, we shall be very late. Besides, you are keeping Polly from her lunch.

J. w. [Aggrieved glance at POLLY] Well, I am—— speechless!

[Exit R., MADGE, briskly followed by J. w.—POLLY is about to follow when ROBERTS shows in BARWELL and SERRANO R. C. Exit ROBERTS R. C. SERRANO remains up C.]

BAR. [Coming down] Pretty Polly——

POLLY. [Turning] Dick! [Annoyed] Oh, it's you.

BAR. You permit my kid brother to address you in that familiar manner?

SERRANO. [Sidling up to BARWELL] She is charming! Present me.

BAR. [Grins at Spaniard's enthusiasm] Miss Pauline Carter,—Senor Serrano, nephew of his Excellency, the President of the Republic of Guatama—
[To POLLY] Where is your dear sister?

POLLY. [Worried] Madge must not be disturbed.

BAR. [Nonchalant] Either Madge comes to me, or I go to her.

POLLY. Further delay! This is maddening!
[Flounces off R.]

SERRANO. [Watching her] Beautiful! The daughter of your friend, you know her well?

BAR. [Lazily] No poaching, Serrano.

SERRANO. [Gratified smile] I am incapable!

BAR. [Cynical] Ha! Ha!

[Enter R. MADGE.]

MADGE. [Impatiently] My guests are at table.

BAR. Don't urge us to stop. Serrano is so restless.

[SERRANO seizes excuse to bow low.]

[MADGE ignores him.]

MADGE. [To BARWELL] Why do you bring such a person to our house?

BAR. Your father vouches for him; however—
[Shrugs shoulders. X nonchalantly to SERRANO] As a favor, Senor, go and sit in the hansom. [Aside] Miss Carter desires to speak with me privately.

SERRANO. Ah! ha! [Exit R. C., with a knowing look.]

BAR. This morning we agreed that my absence from town might clarify the domestic atmosphere.

MADGE. "Purify" would be the better word.

BAR. [Anxiously] Senator Herington is here?

MADGE. I expect him at any moment.

BAR. And Mildred?

MADGE. [Unwillingly] Mildred is here.

BAR. [Rapidly] An hour ago our new Minister to Denmark was stricken with apoplexy on the way to his steamship. He cannot live. You have known Herington for many years?

MADGE. [Doubtfully] Well?

BAR. [Rapidly] Serrano has inside information that our present Minister to Guatama has been promised the first European vacancy. Herington must have me chosen to fill the vacancy thus created at Guatama.

MADGE. [Delighted: incredulous] Are you serious? If Senator Herington succeeds in having you appointed Minister to Guatama, you will go away and leave Mildred unmolested?

BAR. [Assenting] Besides, there is always the attractive possibility that the tropical climate may carry me off to a spot far warmer than Guatama.

MADGE. [Heartily] I'll do my utmost to enlist Jack Herington's services on your behalf.

BAR. That's the talk. Send Mildred here.

MADGE. [Doubtfully] You will not——?

BAR. I am as playful as a kitten. Trot her out. [Exit R. MADGE. BARWELL goes up to window and, while pantomiming off stage, says aloud] Patience, Senor. One moment, and I rejoin you.

[Enter R. MILDRED.]

MILDRED. [Coldly] What are you doing?

BAR. [Comes down, instantly rubbed the wrong way] Saluting a friend of the male persuasion—nothing worse. [Curt] I have a couple of foreigners on my hands who will dine with us to-night.

MILDRED. [Petulant] Must you drag in people

whom nobody knows?

BAR. [Harshly] I know them. [Eagerly] Don't let Herington back out. I shall use him as a table decoration. It isn't everybody who can exhibit a live United States Senator. These foreigners have made me an attractive proposition to go to Guatama.

MILDRED. [Catching her breath] You are planning to go to Guatama?

BAR. Too good to be true, eh? Yes, if things can be arranged in Washington, you shall enjoy the exquisite pleasure of bidding me a long farewell. [Earnestly] Herington's backing will be simply invaluable.

MILDRED. To you? In what way?

BAR. [Rapidly] Within twenty-four hours our Minister to Guatama will be slated for promotion. I must have the Guatama appointment.

MILDRED. [Suspicious] Why?

BAR. [Searching for explanation] Er—er—the salary is something, and besides, it will give me an official standing in the community, which means a lot in those one-horse Spanish-American republics. [MILDRED remains immobile] [Genially] Here is your golden opportunity to earn a matrimonial holiday—get busy with Herington, and see what you can do.

MILDRED. [Shrinks back] Make friends with Senator Herington?

BAR. [Insolently] Fast friends, if you like—Madge will also do her best to bring him round my way.

MILDRED. A word from Madge will be quite sufficient. She has known Senator Herington since girlhood.

BAR. [Pointed] And for that very reason may possess little or no influence. Your face and figure are infinitely superior to hers.

MILDRED. George, if you were a human being——!

BAR. Cut it out. Cut it out. This is business.

MILDRED. [Haughty] You instruct me to open a flirtation with Senator Herington?

BAR. I give you carte blanche. You'll find him a cinch, or I'm no judge of character. Politicians are as vain as clergymen.

MILDRED. This is simply out of the question.

BAR. [Persuasively] Get Herington into telephone communication with the State Department this afternoon. To-morrow there will be a score of applicants for the post.

MILDRED. [firmly] I shall do nothing of the kind.

BAR. [Incensed] The hell you won't! You will do nothing to make yourself useful, but you can come whining to me for money every ten minutes—when I have any. [Scanning her face] Look here, Mildred, don't be timid. This fellow is a new hand at the Washington game. He won't venture to ask favors in return.

MILDRED. [Haughtily] If he should?

BAR. [Insolently] One ray of sunshine doesn't melt an iceberg. [Enter R. C., HERINGTON.] [Over genial] Ah, Senator, Mrs. Barwell, more fortunate than her better half, is to have the pleasure of lunching in your company.

HER. [Non-committal] I have been detained——

BAR. Business drags me away. [Forcing HERINGTON to take his hand] Until eight o'clock, Senator. [Significant glance at MILDRED] Sans adieu, my dear. [Exit R. C.]

HER. [Gravely] I have stolen away from an important conference in order to come here.

MILDRED. [Lightly, to cover feelings] Make no apology for stealing, my dear sir. Are you not a member of the United States Senate?

HER. [Smiling gravely] That thrust comes with bad grace from you.

MILDRED. [V venturesome] Indeed! May I ask why?

HER. You were indirectly responsible for the one dishonest act of my career.

MILDRED. Won't you please tell me what you mean?

HER. Years ago, when you had a fad for collecting autographs——?

MILDRED. [Assenting] Yes, I have never parted with my collection.

HER. I once abstracted a letter written by Lincoln from a file of old documents in the office where I served my clerkship as a law student.

MILDRED. Pray what had I to do with that?

HER. You were a receiver of stolen goods, I am afraid. I enclosed the Lincoln letter in a communication which I happened to be sending you at that time. [Pointed] It was June, 1898.

MILDRED. [Haughty] No such letter is in my possession.

HER. [Easily] The letter was of no great value. My employer promptly forgave me the theft.

MILDRED. [Some warmth] No letter such as you describe ever came into my possession.

HER. [Slight sneer] The mails were strangely unreliable during June, 1898.

MILDRED. [Smilingly] You are confusing me with some other woman, Senator.

HER. [Gravely] I have been in the habit of confusing you with any number of women! [She refuses to meet his eyes] What are you doing this afternoon, Mildred?

MILDRED. [Shivers as he utters her name] At five o'clock I go to meet father. [Eyes meeting his] Until five——?

HER. Until five?

MILDRED. [Coquettishly] That remains to be determined. [Seeming irrelevance] Tell me, do you wear glasses?

HER. [Puzzled] For reading, yes.

MILDRED. May I examine them?

HER. [Handing case] Certainly?

MILDRED. [Places case on table] If, after lunch, you say au revoir, and set out for your hotel, what is likely to happen when you find that you have mislaid this case?

HER. [Hesitating] Madge would not approve?

MILDRED. Madge will not be here to disapprove.

HER. But—in her absence—to appropriate her drawing room?

MILDRED. [Baby innocent eyes] Why, what do you mean? [HERINGTON looks uncomfortable] Yielding to the entreaty of my friend, Miss Carter, I have agreed to consult a lawyer. Miss Carter has even selected my legal adviser. Situated as I am, the home of my friend is obviously the most suitable spot for a conference.

HER. [Boyish laugh] Obviously! [Growing light headed] Mildred, you are—

MILDRED. [Playful, yet steadyng him] I am what I am.

[Enter R., POLLY, anxiously.]

POLLY. [X to window] Why are you two not at lunch?

MILDRED. [Calmly] You may answer that question, Senator.

HER. [Lightly] It was not for me to suggest a move, Mrs. Barwell.

MILDRED. Poor soul! [X. R., significantly] I promise not to mention the word business again this afternoon.

HER. [Following MILDRED] Miss Polly will excuse us?

[Exit R.—MILDRED and HERINGTON.]

POLLY. [Coming down, glances at clock] I will excuse anything and anybody, except that fat, lazy Jimmy Williams.

[Enter R. C., ROBERTS, card on salver.]

ROBERTS. Miss Polly, pray don't blame me, Mr. Richard won't stay out.

POLLY. [Alarmed] Mr. Richard must not come in.
[Enter R. C., DICK, important air] Are you losing your senses, Dick? Madge is still in the house.

DICK. That suits me perfectly. [To ROBERTS] Take my card to Miss Carter, if you please.

POLLY. [Tears up card] Roberts shall do nothing of the kind.

DICK. Madge called me down this morning. I don't blame her. You and I have been a bit deceitful. Hereafter our actions shall be open and above board. [Gives fresh card to ROBERTS] Let Miss Carter know that I am here. [To POLLY, chest out] I shall inform Madge that we are bound for the play and ask for a bit of lunch.

POLLY. [Scornfully] A bit of lunch indeed. Madge will treat you to a bit of cold tongue, with sauce vinaigrette.

DICK. [Lofty] May I have my own way, just once?

POLLY. [Angry dignity to ROBERTS] Do as Mr. Barwell bids. [Exit R. ROBERTS.] [To DICK] I can stand this, Richard, if you can. Mark my words, Madge will carry me off to Europe, [pouting] just as my first season out is about to begin.

[Enter R., MADGE, hastily.]

DICK. [Stoutly] I have come to take Polly to the play.

POLLY. [Backing up DICK] Yes, we are going to the play together. Have you any comment to make?

MADGE. I have. [Emphatic] You are *not* to go to the play together.

POLLY. [Disgusted. To DICK] You see. That is what you get for being candid.

MADGE. Polly! [Less sternly] I thank you, Richard, for your courtesy in consulting me. Polly is no longer a little girl. This sort of thing cannot go on. I must withhold my consent.

POLLY. [Spunky] Don't be surprised then, if we go without it.

DICK. [Coaxing] Just this once, Miss Carter, or the tickets will be a dead loss, and you have no idea how hard up I am.

MADGE. [Weakening] Which play did you select?

POLLY. "The Peer and the Poodle."

MADGE. [Turning on DICK] You are willing to have my sister witness such a performance?

DICK. [Astonished] Why not? Is there anything queer about it?

MADGE [Quoting J. w.] It's a beastly thing—vulgar and broad.

DICK. The deuce it is! Who told you that?

MADGE. Someone by no means squeamish—Jimmy Williams. He assured me only this morning that there is scarcely a line in the text to which a self-respecting woman should listen.

[Enter R., J. w. briskly.]

J. w. All ready, Madge. [Surprised to see DICK] Hello! You here? [Catches gaze of trio centred on himself] I beg your pardon? Have I spilt anything on my waistcoat?

MADGE. [Severely] Mr. Williams, I appeal to you. Is the "Peer and the Poodle" a proper piece for Polly to witness?

J. w. [Perceives danger ahead] Do you know, I believe I'll dash back and fortify myself with a second slice of cold chicken.

DICK. [Blocks his retreat] Hold on, Williams. I agree to abide by your decision. That play is perfectly harmless, is it not?

J. w. I should prefer not to discuss the point.

POLLY. [To J. w.] Traitor! [To DICK] He has been trying to make character with Madge by blocking our plans.

MADGE. [Quickly, to J. w.] Then you were aware that these two children had arranged to go to a matinee?

J. w. [Despondent, sits with folded arms] This is one of those things that simply cannot be explained to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

MADGE. [Hurt] You two men, who evidently had some sort of an understanding, had best go to the play together.

DICK. [Gesticulating with two brown tickets] I'm hanged if I go with Williams.

J. w. [Tearing up two green tickets in disgust] Your sentiments are cordially reciprocated, old chap. There go five dollars.

[MILDRED and HERINGTON stroll on R. C., remaining up stage.]

POLLY [Aghast] All stay away and waste four matinee tickets? You must be crazy.

DICK. [Placing his tickets in MADGE's hand—glances at POLLY] Since you are anxious to see the new piece, Miss Carter, why not use our tickets?

MADGE. [Chilly] Thank you, I don't care to leave Polly.

MILDRED. [Coming down] Let me play chaperone. The Senator is about to take his departure, my dear.

HER. [Ill at ease] Forgive me if I eat and run.

MADGE. But you have not half finished luncheon, Jack.

HER. I rarely take more than a bite in the middle of the day.

J. W. [*Aside—disgruntled—jealous*] That fellow and I have positively nothing in common.

MADGE. [*Giving hand to HERINGTON*] Shall I see you, then, at five?

HER. [*Absently*] At five?

MADGE. Have you forgotten our tête-a-tête after the matinee?

J. W. [*Jealous—aside*] The devil! I'll propose again directly the curtain falls on the first act.

HER. [*Shaking hands with MADGE*] Until five, then, [MILDRED goes up C with HERINGTON, who exits R. C.]

MADGE. [*Questioning POLLY*] It is understood then that you remain with Mildred?

MILDRED. [*In window*] Of course she will, Madge. Run along. Why should you forego a pleasant afternoon? [*Waves hand in window to HERINGTON*.]

J. W. [*Conceitedly*] Why, indeed? [*Examines tickets in MADGE's hand*] These seats are on the fourth row center. How can you resist?

[ROBERTS appears R. C. with JIMMY's hat, overcoat, etc.]

MADGE. [*Yielding, hands tickets to J. W.*] If anyone were to take you seriously, JIMMY, you would be in hot water half the time.

J. W. [*Regaining vivacity at a bound*] If any woman ever takes me seriously, I dare say I shall be in hot water all the time. [*Goes up, lays down tickets in order to work into overcoat—forgets tickets.*]

POLLY. [*Down stage, bitterly to DICK*] I am dished out of a matinee.

DICK. [*Aside to POLLY*] Steady, old girl. We'll

cut on the quiet next Saturday. No more open and above board work for me.

J. w. [Up C. hat, gloves, stick in hand] Now then! [Exit R. C., ROBERTS.]

MADGE. [Up C. with MILDRED, who has helped her into coat] Ready. Be good children.

MILDRED. We'll try. [Exit R. C., MADGE and J. w.] [Comes down, smiling at POLLY's frowns.] Cheer up, Polly; all is not lost. I haven't the vaguest notion as to the duties of a chaperone.

POLLY. [Regains cheerfulness] First, you secure a man of your own to talk to.

MILDRED. [Dubious] Oh!

DICK. Then you promptly make yourself scarce.

POLLY. No, no Mildred, you are one in ten thousand. We waive our rights.

[All sit on sofa, MILDRED C.]

MILDRED. [Sighs] At last I am a gooseberry.

DICK. [Sudden inspiration] Promise not to blab, if I tell you something exciting?

MILDRED. [Gravely] Please tell me nothing that must be concealed from Madge.

POLLY. [To DICK] Let me, Dicky.

DICK. Fire away, Polly. Mildred won't squeal.

POLLY. [Defiance to the world] Dick and I are engaged to be married.

MILDRED. [Smiling] At your age? You silly babies.

DICK. That's the point. Is Polly too young to know her own mind?

MILDRED. [Abruptly] At eighteen? No. [Qualifying] Not necessarily—so much depends. [Growing sentimental] Richard Barwell, do you love this child?

DICK.. With all my heart.

MILDRED. [Searchingly] Never a doubting mo-

ment?

DICK. Never a moment's doubt, Mildred, upon my honor.

MILDRED. And you, Polly?

POLLY. [Ecstatic] Oh, Mildred, whenever I think of Dick I feel—oh I can't describe my feelings, but they upset me so.

DICK. [Anxiously] What do you advise?

MILDRED. [Swayed by sympathy and sense] What can I advise. I am a sentimental fool. [Sentiment runs away with her] Polly, if you are sure of your own heart, cling to Dick. A girl's first love becomes life's blessing or her bitterest memory. [Softly] I knew a girl once, a mere lass as you are, and she, too, loved her laddie. In her case, as in yours, the course of true love was not smooth. [Pause] In time she married elsewhere. [DICK gently strokes MILDRED'S hand. She quickly adopts ultra-smart tone] Bless the boy! A wise woman never tells her own story. [Rising] There! Promise not to elope while my back is turned, and I'll bury myself in the library. [Exit R. C.]

DICK. [Excited] Does that word suggest anything to you?

POLLY. What word?

DICK. Elope! I believe she meant it as a tip.

POLLY. [Frightened] No, Dicky, no.

DICK. [Boyish] Come on. Are you game?

POLLY. Oh, Richard, it all seems so dreadfully final.

DICK. Final? Rather. [Looking at her with astonishment] Am I to understand that you have not been in earnest all this time?

POLLY. [Miserable] Dick, dear, you do not doubt my love?

DICK. [A bit stilted] No, no, Polly, but it seems

very odd that you should hesitate to give me this supreme proof of your confidence.

POLLY. [Searching his eyes] I—I—Oh Dick, when you find that you cannot rid yourself of me, you may repent this step.

DICK. [Chilly] Such a thought could scarcely enter your mind, Polly, if you really loved me.

POLLY. [Throwing herself in his arms] I love and trust you. I will do whatever you desire. [Piteously anxious] You will never say harsh things? Just let me love and admire you?

DICK. [Magnanimously] I'll try.

[Enter R. C., CARTER.]

POLLY. Hello, Dad.

CARTER. My dear! [To DICK] Polly forgets that I am not a companion of her own age.

DICK. [Smoothly] There is nothing to indicate to the contrary, sir.

CARTER. [Smirking] Richard, I am not susceptible to flattery. [Offers case] Cigarette?

DICK. [Surprised] In here?

CARTER. [Apprehensively] I was told that Madge had gone out.

POLLY. [Laughing] So she has, Dad. Smoke wherever you like. I'll get the segars for Dick. [Runs off R.]

CARTER. [Lighting cigarette. Pettishly to Dick] You see my position, Richard. I am the victim of moderate circumstances.

[POLLY returns R. with matches and cigars.]

CARTER. [Warningly, as DICK takes a cigar] Madge buys those cigars; however, man has but one life to live. [DICK lights up] I dashed home upon hearing that Mrs. Barwell was lunching here.

POLLY. Mildred is in the library.

CARTER. [Face falls] Oh!

DICK. [Arch glance] Alone.

CARTER. [Radiant] Ah!

DICK. [Manoeuvring] Polly, why not ask Mildred to join us here?

CARTER. Do. Somehow I never feel at ease in the library. [Turns to mirror and arranges hair, tie, etc.]

DICK. [Aside to POLLY] Send Mildred here; I'll get the old man's car and meet you at the corner in fifteen minutes. I know a place in Connecticut where they marry you while you wait.

POLLY. [Laughing fondly] Dear old boy!

CARTER. [Without turning round] Eh?

POLLY. [Quick witted] Dear old boy, shall you mind if I lie down for a bit? We are dining out to-night.

CARTER. [Turns abruptly, frowning] Who is to entertain Dick?

DICK. [Quickly] I must jog along, sir.

CARTER. [Gratified] Ah! [Solicitous to POLLY] By all means, go to your room, my dear. You appear greatly fatigued.

[POLLY, going C., meets MILDRED—stops for an instant as though explaining; shakes hands "good-bye"—then exits.]

CARTER. [Pointedly offers hand to DICK] Must you go so soon?

DICK. [Bubbling over with laughter] I have a pressing engagement, sir.

MILDRED. [X to look at clock, then looks out of window, then shrugs shoulders indifferently and, coming down, shakes hands with CARTER, saying] Walk home with me, Dick—

DICK. Can't possibly, Mildred.

CARTER. [Forcing DICK out R. C.] Punctuality is the courtesy of kings. By bye, my boy. [Exit R. C.

DICK. *Gallantly to MILDRED*] If you will accept the escort of an old fellow, Mrs. Barwell, I shall be delighted to see you home. [She smilingly assents—he gets gay] Must we start at once?

MILDRED. [Making room on sofa] I fancy the grippe has affected my hearing.

CARTER. [Taking the hint] Shouting strains my throat. [Sits—effusively] Mildred, you are the most bewitching of women. Nothing but the fact that you are unavailable deters me from braving matrimony a second time.

MILDRED. [Sighs and makes eyes] Alas, that my husband should thus stand between happiness and myself.

CARTER. Apropos! [Faces her, throwing arm along back of sofa] You will permit me—— [Hitch toward her] A man old enough to be your father—appearances are so deceptive—to do you a great favor?

MILDRED. [Making eyes] Can I refuse you anything?

CARTER. You are committing the error, by no means common among young wives, of giving your husband too little to worry about.

MILDRED. [Humor of the situation appealing to her] It is sweet of you to talk like that.

CARTER. [Encouraged] Not at all; not at all. Through over-confidence in you, George has gradually permitted himself to relapse into—shall we say, bachelor ways?

MILDRED. You have such a nice way of saying nasty things.

CARTER. [Intense] Once give George reasonable grounds to suspect that—Hem!—a really dangerous man is supplanting him in your affections and, my word for it, he will make haste to resume his proper

place at your feet.

MILDRED. [Mock intensity] Would you be willing to co-operate with me in the fulfillment of this laudable design?

CARTER. [Delighted] Hem! I don't wish to appear officious—but—if you insist—

MILDRED. Just what would you advise?

CARTER. Select a—Hem!—a confederate of middle age—a man old enough to conduct himself discreetly—sufficiently young to prove entertaining and [eyes close to hers] receive him as frequently as possible.

MILDRED. [Downcast eyes] Middle-aged men are so attractive. What if I were to become really infatuated?

CARTER. [Chest expands] The woman always runs that risk, poor creature. [Struts up and down conceitedly.]

MILDRED. [As though cogitating] Your plan, though wonderfully ingenious, is deficient in one respect.

CARTER. [Tenderly over back of sofa] Which is?

MILDRED. [Rising and resuming conventional tone] You have failed to take into consideration the trifling detail that I am by no means anxious to bring George Barwell back to my side. [Enter R. C., HERINGTON. Going forward, formally, shakes hands] Senator Herington. [Lowers voice] I had quite given you up.

HER. [Having detained her hand unnecessarily, X to CARTER] Mr. Carter, you do not recognize me?

CARTER. [Puts on glasses, patronizing] John Herington! Why, what brought you East, John?

HER. Business in Washington, Sir.

CARTER. [Blandly] Ah, yes. You have secured a government position?

HER. [Smiling] Yes, sir.

CARTER. Good! In which department?

HER. The Senate.

CARTER. Not bad, John. This may lead to something better.

HER. [Quizzical smile] I hope so, I am sure.

MILDRED. [Unable to conceal her pride in HERINGTON] Mr. Herington is a member of the United States Senate.

CARTER. Ha! Ha! Ha! Don't you wish that were true, John?

HER. [Smiling] I have every reason to believe that Mrs. Barwell does not exaggerate.

CARTER. [Heartily] Why Herington, why John, this is glorious. I wish my wife were here to enjoy this. You were one of her boys, when you first came to New York—

HER. [Reverently] God bless her warm heart. She bade me welcome to this house when I was poor and absurdly proud.

CARTER. You were a forty-fourth cousin, twice removed, and deucedly hard up. I found you a couple of young numskulls, who required the services of a tutor.

HER. [Gratefully] Their money went a long way toward paying my expenses in the law school.

CARTER. [Swelling with importance] Exactly! In a sense, I may regard you as my protégé. My protégé a Senator! I felicitate myself upon your success in life. [Abruptly to MILDRED] You knew one another in the old days, I think.

MILDRED. Yes, indeed.

CARTER. [Genially] Of course, of course! What a foolish question! I forgot that you were once engaged. [HERINGTON and MILDRED petrified R. and L.] And now we are good friends and meet with no

ill will on either side? Quite right. It's a mistake to have any feeling in such matters.

MILDRED. [With an effort] How did you——?

HER. Let me. [To CARTER] Mr. Carter, what leads you to infer that I once had the honor to be engaged to Mrs. Barwell?

CARTER. My wife told me, in strict confidence.

HER. [Aside to MILDRED] I turned to her for sympathy, when the wound was bleeding.

MILDRED. [Aloud] She betrayed you. Never trust a woman.

CARTER. [Pettishly] Tut! Tut! Between man and wife there should be no secrets—especially the wife's. I promised Mrs. Carter not to pass it on.

HER. [Gravely] Will you be good enough to regard that promise as still binding?

CARTER. [Peevish] My dear boy, don't make a mountain out of a mole hill. I haven't committed murder.

MILDRED. [Impulsively] Senator Herington is acting as my legal adviser.

CARTER. [Eyes begin to open] Oh, ho!

HER. [Gravely assenting] Mrs. Barwell retains me at the request of your daughter Madge.

CARTER. [Shrewdly] Herington, are you a married man?

HER. [With a glance at MILDRED] Not yet.

CARTER. [Xs to MILDRED—paternal] You are a sweet girl, my dear and deserving of all happiness, but—Oh, children, I am an old fool, I dare say, to meddle in other people's affairs. I am proud and fond of you both. John Herington [X pugnaciously to HERINGTON] if the breath of scandal touches this woman's fair name, I shall make a conscientious effort to break every bone in your body. [Exit R. C.]

[Pause—MILDRED and HERINGTON conscious that the beginning of the end is near; momentarily he appears cool, she shows agitation.]

HER. [With a shrug and a glance toward Carter's retreating figure] Fools venture in— Shall I leave you, Mildred? Decide.

MILDRED. [Unflinchingly] Through no weakness of ours, the ice is broken. Remain. [Quietly extends her hand which he gravely takes, each studying the other's eyes.]

MILDRED. [Coming back to earth] Come, we must leave this house at once.

HER. [Surprised] Why so?

MILDRED. I cannot face Mr. Carter again.

HER. The old boy has told us nothing new. [Fondly] You won't dispute that we were once betrothed?

MILDRED. [Agitated] What is the extent of his information? How much of our story did you confide to Mrs. Carter?

HER. [Gently] Hush, Mildred. Your question is an insult. Our history remains a secret between you and me.

MILDRED. [Bitterly] And George Barwell.

HER. [Dismayed] What!

MILDRED. [Faltering] I told him that I had been in love before I met him.

HER. [Offering hand] Good bye.

MILDRED. Good bye? You are angry with me?

HER. [Explaining] To be seen together, while this divorce is pending—

MILDRED. [Slowly, eyes cast down] Mr. Barwell is ignorant of the other man's name.

HER. [Surprised, irresolutely] Oh!

MILDRED. [Halting explanation] There was always the possibility that you and I might be brought face

to face in his presence. It would have proved most awkward.

HER. [Amused, despite gravity of situation] Woman, woman, you close the door upon the past, yet leave the latch string hanging out. [Yielding to temptation, he returns to her and bends gently to kiss her hand] It won't do. Good bye.

MILDRED. [Going all to pieces] Not my hand, Jack, oh not my hand.

[He takes her in his arms. A moment later, hearing the front door close, she lifts her head.]

MILDRED. Listen!

HER. [Tranquil, having heard nothing] What is it, dear?

MILDRED. [Frightened] Stay where you are. [Springs away from him, and X, he following for a few steps, puzzled] No, no, you must not follow me. Stay where you are.

[Enter R. C., MADGE in time to witness part of MILDRED'S retreat and overhear "You must not follow me. Stay where you are." Picture!]

MILDRED. [To MADGE, making conversation rapidly] Has anything gone wrong? What brings you back so suddenly?

MADGE. [Eyes on HERINGTON] So unexpectedly, it would seem.

[Enter R. C., J. w. disconsolate.]

J. w. [Sadly] I am the goat. [Picks up tickets] Here are the tickets. I am desperately sorry.

MILDRED. [Talking feverishly] How unfortunate! Jimmy forgot the tickets?

MADGE. [Savage eyes fastened on HERINGTON] Perhaps it was just as well.

J. w. [Piteously] We were a trifle late. The house was sold out. I couldn't procure another pair of seats for love nor money. [To MADGE] Shall we

return for the last two acts?

MADGE. [Snaps] No.

J. W. [Patience exhausted, snaps back] Oh! well, don't get crusty.

MADGE. [Kindly] I beg your pardon, Jimmy. Forgive me if I appear put out.

J. W. [Recovers spirits] You were not put out, you know. We couldn't get in.

MADGE. You may smoke in the library. I have a word to say to this [scornful] gentleman.

J. W. [Going, to MILDRED] It's a bit unusual for Madge to spare me and row with someone else. Does it mean that she has taken a fancy to this fellow? [Exit R. C.]

MILDRED. [To HERINGTON — making talk feverishly] Madge and Mr. Williams are great friends—

HER. [Outwardly calm] Yes?

MADGE. [Crushing directness] My friends need give Senator Herington no further concern. He is no longer enrolled among their number.

MILDRED. Listen, Madge—

HER. [Sternly] This is my quarrel, if you please, Mrs. Barwell.

MADGE. Through me you were permitted to renew your acquaintance with Mrs. Barwell; through me you were admitted to her confidence. Under the circumstances an insult to Mrs. Barwell is an insult to myself. Leave this house—

MILDRED. Stop, Madge. When John Herington leaves this house, I go with him.

[MADGE turns to her in amazement.]

HER. Mildred, in justice to Madge, yourself and me, an explanation should be made.

MADGE. [Withering, to HERINGTON] This morning you honored me with your attentions. [MILDRED first shows jealousy] This afternoon I find you

[*shrug*] otherwise engaged.

HER. This morning a lonely man turned to the woman he has long regarded as his dearest friend, and begged her to share his lot. He told her no lies; he uttered no fervent protestations. This afternoon she finds him reconciled to the sweetheart whom he worshipped in years gone by, the girl whom he has never forgotten.

MADGE. [*Incredulously to MILDRED*] You reconciled to Jack? Why, you never knew him well.

MILDRED. [*Softly*] Oh yes, I knew him well. I said this morning that my luck must change. It was fate, Madge. Fate brought us together.

MADGE. [*Practical*] Fate? It was stupid, blundering Madge Carter. [*X and kneels at MILDRED's side*] Forgive me, dear. What have I done?

MILDRED. [*Smiling through tears*] Forgive you for bringing happiness into my life? [*Softly*] I am very, very happy.

MADGE. [*Springing to her feet*] Happy on the brink of a precipice? Are you blind? Your reputation? [*To HERINGTON*] There will be a scandal. Your public career will be ruined.

HER. [*Fondly*] "All for love, or the world well lost."

MADGE. Until the world is actually lost; then discord, dissension, despair. Mildred, if you love Jack, you will command him to leave you at once.

MILDRED. [*Softly*] Jack, I command you to leave me at once.

HER. [*To MADGE, clasping MILDRED's hand*] You exact too great a sacrifice, my friend. [*Bends to kiss hand. Enter R. C., CARTER and J. W., chatting and laughing and halt spellbound. MILDRED and HERINGTON have not presence of mind to extricate themselves and remain with hands clasped.*]

J. W. [To CARTER] I say, come and watch the little birds. We are not wanted here. [Turns pointedly and goes up to gaze out of window.]

CARTER. [Coming down aside to MADGE;—fine display of virtue] You permit this sort of thing to go on under your very eyes?

[MILDRED and HERINGTON separate awkwardly.]

MADGE. [Seeking plausible explanation] Father, I don't know what you mean. Mildred was about to congratulate Senator Herington.

J. W. [Turns round abruptly, alarmed] You haven't—— [Wails] I knew it! I knew it!

MADGE. [To CARTER, hard pressed] As my friend, don't you understand?

CARTER. [Obtuse] I do not understand.

J. W. [Wails] I do. I do. I can see through a hole with a millstone in it.

CARTER. [To MADGE] As your friend, she congratulates him? [Snobbish, aside] You haven't thrown yourself away on John Herington? [X to J. W.]

MILDRED. [Aside to MADGE] You must not compromise yourself.

MADGE. Hush, Mildred. For your sake and for his, be silent.

MILDRED. [Jealous] You love him? Tell me the truth.

MADGE. I am his friend and yours. [Aloud] Father——

HER. [X rapidly to MADGE] I forbid you to speak. We shall find some other way out of this difficulty.

[BARWELL, off R. C., heard shouting "MILDRED," "MADGE." "ROBERTS, where are they?" and he dashes in R. C.]

BAR. [To all] Was ever anything more opportune? Our Minister to Denmark is dead. [Noting

silence, looks about him] The devil! Have you women seen his ghost already?

CARTER. [Savagely to BARWELL] Your wife has had a finger in this pie. [BARWELL looks enquiringly at MILDRED] A moment ago, when I entered this room—

MADGE. [Quickly, to prevent disclosure] Mr. Barwell, you, too, will be interested in what I am about to say. This morning, Senator Herington asked me to marry him. [Giving her hand to HERINGTON, who receives it mechanically] I am ready to become his wife.

J. W. [Bitterly] Just because I forgot the tickets. Isn't that like a woman?

CURTAIN.

THIRD ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE: *Barwell's library. Doors R. to drawing room, L. to billiard room and C. to hall, which is practical both R. and L.*

TIME: 4.45 P. M. *Same day as Acts I and II.*

DISCOVER: *Mildred, in tea gown, seated dreaming before open fire, chin resting on hand, open book face down on lap. On table telephone instrument, the bell of which is ringing spasmodically as curtain rises; she pays no heed. There is no light in the room other than the fire.*

[Enter C. R., KELLY; turns switch lighting table lamps; X to telephone and unhooks.]

KELLY. [In transmitter] Yes'r. Yes'r. [X to MILDRED] Senator Herington on the wire, ma'm.

MILDRED. [Without moving] Mr. Barwell has not come in.

KELLY. Senator Herington would like to speak with you, ma'm.

MILDRED. [Looks up—eyes flash] Not at home.

KELLY. [Impassive] Yes'm. [X to telephone—business—hangs up receiver.]

MILDRED. [Lighting cigarette] I shall dine in my room.

KELLY. Beg pardon, ma'm. To-night there is a dinner party.

MILDRED. [Indifferently — exhaling cloud of smoke] I am dining in my room.

KELLY. [Impassive] Yes'm. That makes how

many covers, if you please?

MILDRED. [Indifferently] Really, I don't know.
[Enter C. R. BARWELL as though coming from street]
You might ask Mr. Barwell.

BARWELL. [Abruptly to MILDRED] What was that?
[To KELLY] Put on the lights in this room. [KELLY turns switch. Lights on full.]

MILDRED. [Pettish] Do tell Kelly how many covers to lay to-night. I presume you know that the butler left us this morning.

BARWELL. [Cheerfully] We can't compete with people who pay their servants cash. [Enumerating] Serve for Mrs. Barwell, Judge Platt, myself—

MILDRED. [Weak interruption] I am dining in my room.

BARWELL. [Shutting her off] You are doing nothing of the kind. [Rapidly enumerates] Mrs. Barwell, Judge Platt, myself, three Carters, Von Ulm, Serrano—

MILDRED. [Casually] I fancy I asked Jimmy Williams to come in—

BARWELL. [Parenthetically] He eats enough for two— [Concludes] and Senator Herington. [To KELLY] Covers for ten.

KELLY. Very good, sir. [Exit C. R.]

MILDRED. [Friendly approach] Will you drive down with me to meet father at five o'clock?

BARWELL. [Secretly pleased] The spectacle of such conjugal felicity would excite too much comment. [Exulting] Herington hooked up with Washington before I left him this afternoon. [Condescending] I rather like that chap.

MILDRED. [Frigid] Yes?

BARWELL. What the deuce can he find to admire in Madge Carter?

MILDRED. [Spitefully] Her fortune, possibly.

BARWELL. [Grins] I hadn't thought of that.

MILDRED. [Resolutely] George, will you take me with you to Guatama?

BARWELL. [Promptly] I will not.

MILDRED. How am I to explain the situation?

BARWELL. The situation explains itself. Ever since woman was created in man's image, the earth has harbored discordant couples.

MILDRED. [Going, makes last effort to avoid danger] You shall not go away and leave me alone.

BARWELL. [Cynic] Thanks, my love. That sounded as though you really meant it.

[Enter C. R. KELLY.]

KELLY. One of the gentlemen you expected, sir: the dark one.

BARWELL. [All eagerness] Show him in. [Exit C. R. KELLY.] [To MILDRED, extending his hand with mock gallantry] Business before pleasure, my love. We'll fight this out some other time. [Exit L. MILDRED] [BARWELL goes up C. and calls off R. genially] Come in, Serrano. Don't stand on ceremony. [Enter C. R. SERRANO] You are ahead of time.

SERRANO [Suavely] I planned to get here ahead of time.

BARWELL. [Cynic] And incidentally get ahead of Von Ulm, I assume?

SERRANO. [Watching BARWELL out of corner of his eye] I did not come here to be insulted.

BARWELL. [Harshly] You came here presumably to suggest a plan whereby we might give Von Ulm the double cross. I acquiesce without hesitation.

SERRANO. [Still cautious] You are willing to——?

BARWELL. I am quite willing to feather my own nest. Angels can do no more.

SERRANO. [Trusting BARWELL at last] Those claims in Guatama for which our easy-going friend, Von

Ulm, stands ready to pay ten cents on the dollar, can be secured by [Winks] one whom you know, at two cents on the dollar, gold.

BARWELL. Drawback, eight cents on the dollar, or two hundred and forty thousand, cash. [Mocking approval] Not bad, Serrano. Where there is a will, there is a way to graft.

SERRANO. We shall, however, require for this collateral enterprise the temporary use of sixty thousand in gold.

*BARWELL. [Whistles] Why not ask for the moon while you are about it?

SERRANO. [Triumphant smile] As a favor to me, the Assistant Treasurer of Guatama, my cousin, will wink at the removal of sixty thousand in gold from the government vaults.

BARWELL. The Assistant Treasurer of Guatama is a scholar and a gentleman. Your cousin shall have ten thousand for winking at the psychological moment. [Becoming boisterous] Money, money, nothing but money! [Seizes pad and pencil] How do we stand on the big divvy?

SERRANO. Four hundred thousand apiece, gross.

BARWELL. [Agitated] Four hundred thousand dollars!

SERRANO. [Sad] Gross, my dear friend, gross; not net, unfortunately. Out of our respective shares Von Ulm must care for his German contingent: I for the Government of Guatama; and you—

[BARWELL pours two drinks of brandy.]

BARWELL. [Roughly] I'll take care of myself.

SERRANO. [Oily smile] And others?

BARWELL. And others, if necessary. [Passes glass of brandy.]

SERRANO. [Raising glass with bow] Down with the Monroe Doctrine, eh? Ha! Ha! Ha!

BARWELL. [Savagely] Down with anything that stands between fortune and myself. [Drinks.]

[Enter C. R., von ULM, evening paper in hand.]

von ULM. [Admiringly] My dear Barwell, you are a hustler. How did you do it?

BARWELL. [Feverish anxiety shows through assumed nonchalance] [Reads] "It is rumored that the President will on Monday next sent to the Senate the name of George Barwell, Jr., son of the well known New York capitalist and man of affairs, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera." [Cynically] The next American Minister to Guatama pledges himself to keep his government properly misinformed of the course of events. [Slaps von ULM familiarly on back] The thrifty German shall collect his money. [Enter R. KELLY, bearing card] What is it? [Takes card] This is for Mrs. Barwell, you fool.

KELLY. Yes'r. Mrs. Barwell is dressing. The lady is in a great hurry and would like a word with you.

[SERRANO and von ULM promptly rise.]

SERRANO. Direct me to the nearest cable office. [Glance at BARWELL] I press the button.

BARWELL. [Warm clasp of von ULM's hand] We do the rest, eh Baron? [Hospitably] Remember, dinner at eight sharp. Kelly, show the gentlemen out. [Exit C. R., SERRANO, von ULM and KELLY] [BARWELL X to door R. and throwing back curtains, calls] Come in, Madge. [Turns away to table and selects a segar.]

[Enter R., MADGE, troubled.]

MADGE. [In doorway] I must apologize——

BARWELL. [Turns toward her, lighting segar] No apology is necessary.

MADGE. Have Dick and Polly been here?

BARWELL. Frequently.

MADGE. This afternoon?

BARWELL. No.

MADGE. Do you know where Polly is to be found?

BARWELL. If I knew, you would be the last person to whom I should impart the information.

MADGE. Polly left home on foot alone this afternoon—something she is never permitted to do. Roberts detected traces of tears when she passed him at the door.

BARWELL. So you interrogate your servants on the subject of your sister's whereabouts?

MADGE. Don't, George, don't. I am dreadfully worried. If you can give me no information, perhaps I had better wait until Mildred finishes dressing. Shall I be in the way here?

BARWELL. Not in my way. I am going out. [Going up C. he meets MILDRED, who enters C. L., still in tea gown.]

MILDRED. [Frigidly to MADGE] I have delayed my toilette so that you might not be kept waiting.

BARWELL. [Imitating MILDRED] A consideration which I never display toward my husband, I assure you, ma'm. [MILDRED annihilates him with a glance. He pretends to shiver] Burrrr !! I'll go out and roll in the snow to get warm. [Exit C. R.]

MILDRED. [Defiantly] You have come to invite me to serve as your matron of honor? Thank you so much.

MADGE. Be just, Mildred. My motive this afternoon was sufficiently obvious—

MILDRED. [Frigid] Quite obvious. When is the ceremony to take place?

MADGE. [Hurt] I acted, as I thought, for the best.

MILDRED. There is nothing like taking advantage of one's opportunities.

MADGE. [Changing topic, draws herself up with dignity] I have come here in search of my sister.

When did you last see Polly? Did she go to meet Dick?

MILDRED. Really I can't attempt to keep track of the matrimonial escapades of the Carter family.
[Bows in dismissal.]

MADGE. [Going—pauses up C. to revert to Herington] You will live to thank me, Mildred, for my conduct this afternoon.

MILDRED. [Deep courtesy, facing up stage] I am oppressed with a feeling of profound gratitude.

MADGE. [Pitying the girl, comes down, explaining] It was a mere subterfuge to cover appearances, as you very well know.

MILDRED. [Haughtily] To me your engagement is a finality. This morning Senator Herington asked you to be his wife. Had I known this, believe me, I should not now stand here bitterly humiliated.

MADGE. [Impulsively X to MILDRED] Why torture yourself, Mildred?

MILDRED. [Facing front, on verge of tears] He asked you to be his wife. [Bitterly] Oh, it's all right. I have no one but myself to blame. Who would believe that Mildred Barwell could conduct herself like an unsophisticated school-girl?

[Enter C. R. JIMMY WILLIAMS, one glove off, blowing on fingers.]

J. w. I say, Madge, you mustn't scold if I disobey orders and come indoors. That taximeter is like a refrigerator.

MILDRED. [Raising eyebrows] Already cabbing it about town with an old flame! Poor Herington!
[Goes up.]

J. w. [Angrily to MADGE] Yesterday it was nobody's business where you took me.

MADGE. [Soothing] Mildred is teasing you, Jimmy.
J. w. Mrs. Barwell is quite correct. Your fianceé

is the proper person to dance attendance. Let Herington turn out to-morrow morning and take you to church. I shall lie abed until noon.

MILDRED. [Coming down] Do nothing rash, James, I beg.

J. W. [Turns to MILDRED for sympathy] There is something behind all this. You can't convince me that Madge finds anything attractive in such a commonplace individual.

MILDRED. [Quickly] Oh, do you consider Senator Herington commonplace?

J. W. Distinctly! For example: he wears laced boots with a frock coat.

MADGE. Jimmy, you are making a fool of yourself.

J. W. [Angrily] I have been a fool ever since I met you. I dare say Mrs. Barwell has noticed it.

MILDRED. [Mock gravity] I have.

J. W. [Triumphant to MADGE] You see! [Plainly] Who has been in the habit of proposing to you once a month on the average for the past five years? [Triumphantly] I have. [Plainly] Did you ever offer to send me about my business. On the contrary, you suffered me to go down on my knees at every convenient opportunity. Which is all part of the game, of course, and every good natured man expects to go through a certain amount of that sort of thing, on the theory that the girl will say "Yes" when she gets quite ready to say "Yes"; and now, [Wailing] now I'm hanged if you haven't gone and said "Yes" to the other fellow.

[Enter C. R. CARTER, dejected.]

CARTER. [Seeing MADGE] You here? [To MILDRED] I dropped in to ask for a cup of tea and a few cheerful words. [To all] Dick's father doesn't know where he is this afternoon.

J. w. [Sympathetically] What's the matter with the old chap? Dotty?

CARTER. [Irritably] Where Dick is, I mean. [To MADGE] Jimmy is a frightful ass. Where shall I go next?

MADGE. [Stumped] I don't know what to say.

CARTER. [Almost whimpering] This morning I was a happy parent. This afternoon my daughters prepare to abandon me. Soon there will be no place that I can call home.

MADGE. You know better, father.

CARTER. [Irritably] I will not accompany you beyond the confines of civilization. Better a hall bedroom in the Borough of Manhattan than a castle in Dakota.

MADGE. [Rises] We may postpone this discussion, I think. [To CARTER and J. w.] Come.

CARTER. [Balking] I have no inclination to return home.

J. w. [Short lived independence] Home, that place we go when everything else is closed! What a night I shall make of it.

MADGE. [Summoning] Jimmy.

J. w. [Revolt collapses] Yes, certainly. [Meekly follows MADGE out C. R.]

CARTER. [Gloomily watching exit of MADGE and J. w.] That girl has an incipient tendency toward bigamy. [Self reproach] Dolt that I was, I fancied Herington was épris of you.

MILDRED. [Eyes work mechanically] More so than most men?

CARTER. [Growing chipper, sits beside her] No, No. All men are born equally your admirers, Mrs. Barwell. [Closer] Tell me, is it true that George goes to Guatama and [Very close] very soon?

MILDRED. [Bored] I believe so. Senator Hering-

ton has promised him the post.

CARTER. Why Guatama? It's a deadly hole; no society except half breeds and mosquitoes.

MILDRED. [Indifferent] You must ask George. This morning he mentioned his plans for the first time. [Rising] Excuse me one moment. I'll order tea. Our butler has left us. [Exit L. MILDRED.]

CARTER. [Comprehending, follows her to door L.] This morning George first spoke of Guatama? Guatama was the place mentioned by those adventurers. [Comes down R., excited]

[Enter C. R. KELLY, showing in HERINGTON.]

KELLY. Be good enough to wait here, sir. [Exit L. KELLY.]

CARTER. Ah, John, listen to me. You are pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for this man Barwell. He is using you for his own ends.

HER. [Indifferently] Very likely. Such is life.

CARTER. This appointment will compromise you with the administration.

[Enter L. KELLY.]

KELLY. [To HERINGTON] Mrs. Barwell will see you in one moment, sir. [Exit C. R.]

CARTER. George is a sly dog, but he shall not jeopardize the future of my son-in-law. Before Mrs. Barwell returns, John, may I have one word?

HER. Some other time, Mr. Carter, with great pleasure. [Enter L. MILDRED] Your husband will receive the coveted appointment. I have the President's promise. [She bows coldly and sits facing front.]

CARTER. [Trying to speak over HERINGTON'S shoulder] Herington, don't commit yourself until you have seen me. I know all about this Guatama affair.

HER. [Bored, over shoulder] Then there is nothing left for you to learn, sir.

CARTER. [Incensed] This means that you brook no advice? Then, by George, let me inform you, if your reputation suffers, through your own stupidity and wrong headedness, you shall not enter my family.

HER. [Amused] My dear sir, I never force my way in where I am unwelcome. [Exit C. R. CARTER, highly incensed.]

MILDRED. [Quietly, without looking at HERINGTON] You are not welcome here. I shall have no further occasion for your services. I remain with my husband.

HER. [Quietly] That is best. May I sit down?

MILDRED. [Coldly—rising] I prefer not. [Suddenly gives way and pours forth torrent of words] A married woman is fair game, is she not? Go to your fiancée and beg her forgiveness; tell her the truth; tell her that an hour after you sought her hand in marriage, you were in pursuit of a married woman. Let Madge know the character of the man to whom she has pledged herself.

HER. [Firmly] I am *not* engaged to Madge Carter. I have never forgotten my love for you.

MILDRED. [Lips curling] A married woman!

HER. [On the defensive] Have I created the situation? [Softly] Mildred, I loved you as a girl. Why did you jilt me?

MILDRED. You are in default, my distinguished legal adviser. That appeal should have been argued ten years ago.

HER. [Growing warmer] You read my letters at the time. What more could I say or do?

MILDRED. [Bitterly] No, I did not read your letters—for the best of all possible reasons.

HER. My poverty was such that I couldn't go to you and plead my case in person; my letters remained unanswered——

MILDRED. [Interrupts, choking with emotion] You never wrote; not a line; not one word.

HER. [Vehemently] I wrote until pride called a halt.

MILDRED. [Tempestuously] I don't believe you. Did you ask Madge to marry you?

HER. Mildred, be reasonable.

MILDRED. I won't be reasonable. Did you ask Madge Carter to marry you?

HER. [Assenting] This morning, before I had seen you.

MILDRED. You were in earnest?

HER. The situation was fully explained in your presence.

MILDRED. [Bitterly] To your satisfaction, no doubt. [Tempestuously] Before your proposal to Madge was an hour old, you stumbled upon a discarded plaything—a toy cast aside ten years ago.

HER. It is false. You wrote in '98 and threw me over.

MILDRED. [Anguish] My God, Jack, do you suppose I wrote that letter of my own free will? Mother dictated every word. A line from you and I would have waited a thousand years.

HER. I wrote, I wrote, I tell you.

MILDRED. [Wilfully] It's a lie. Then, you were glad enough to be rid of me. Now, you hope to make me your—

[Pause.]

HER. [Cold, loveless voice] That will do. I have heard quite enough.

MILDRED. [Concludes with latent fierceness] As you know, Mr. Herington, I despise my husband, but I hate you—I hate you as only a woman hates a man who has grossly insulted her. [Going, she X's to L.]

[Enter C. R. MADGE.]

MADGE. [To HERINGTON] What have you done to father? He came home in a towering rage.

MILDRED. [Sneering] And you hastened around the corner to rescue Jack? I assure you, Senator Hington's conduct has been most circumspect.

MADGE. I have no right to question Senator Herington's actions.

MILDRED. My dear, reserve all such concessions until after marriage, when small favors are gratefully received.

MADGE. I want Mildred to know, John, that I have no claim whatsoever upon you.

MILDRED. [Mock gratitude] Thank you so much.

MADGE. Jack is not engaged to me—never has been—never can be—Will you believe that I am disinterested?

MILDRED. Poor chap! Does no one want him?

MADGE. But I have every right, Mildred, to criticise your conduct. *You*, as a woman, should be able to distinguish right from wrong. [To HERINGTON] What are you doing here? Prove your affection for Mildred by leaving town at once. Be man enough to run away from temptation.

HER. Mrs. Barwell and I understand one another perfectly. She will remain Mrs. Barwell unto the end of time. [To MILDRED] That I think is your determination?

MILDRED. It is. Forgive me, if I appear rude.

HER. [Jaws snap] So far as I am concerned, the incident is closed.

[MADGE pats HERINGTON'S arm encouragingly, MILDRED watching, bitter loneliness welling up in her heart.

[Enter C. R. JUDGE PLATT, followed by KELLY carrying grip.]

MILDRED. [*Cry of a broken hearted child*] Daddy, daddy, Oh dad, I am so glad to see you. [*In his arms. Finally*] How did you get here so soon?

JUDGE. [*Blandly*] Strangely enough, my darling, the train reached Forty-second Street on time. Are the children well? [*Turns and shakes hands warmly with MADGE.*]

MILDRED. [*Matter of fact*] Kelly, how are the children to-day?

KELLY. [*Impassive*] Quite well, ma'm. Miss MILDRED hit Master George a blow on the nose at breakfast which closed one eye, but he ain't really damaged.

HER. [*To MILDRED—shocked—the last straw*] You have two children?

MILDRED. [*Haughtily—noting his surprise*] Is there any further information which I may have the pleasure of furnishing you?

HER. [*Sternly*] None. Good bye.

MILDRED. [*Conventional tone as she turns her back on him to X to JUDGE*] Good afternoon.

[MADGE, who has been chatting with JUDGE PLATT, has gone up C, awaiting HERINGTON. HERINGTON gives a slight bow in MILDRED's direction and follows MADGE off C. R.]

[*Directly they are off, MILDRED becomes the tender, affectionate daughter.*]

MILDRED. Dad, shall we make believe that I am once more your little girl? May I take my accustomed seat?

[*Exit C. R. KELLY with street garments of JUDGE.*]

JUDGE. [*Comic anxiety*] My love, your father's knees are sixty-five years old.

MILDRED. Do you intimate that I am growing stout? Oh, horror! [*Fondly*] To go from the sublime to the practical, father, have you eaten any-

thing since morning——?

JUDGE. [Producing lunch in napkin from grip] Your cousin, Sabina Moore, thoughtfully prepared a light repast.

MILDRED. [Reproving] Unopened! Father!

JUDGE. [Smiling guiltily] I became absorbed in a paper covered novel, purchased on the train.

MILDRED. You are incorrigible. An omelette shall be cooked for you at once. [Going to give orders, she meets POLLY and DICK, who enter C. R.] Hello! You two haven't run away, after all?

POLLY. [Ignoring remark—dignity of a young matron] So very glad to find you at home. [X to JUDGE] How do you do, Judge Platt?

MILDRED. Stay and have tea, Polly. I'll order some of your favorite sweets.

POLLY. [Forgetting her matronly dignity] Um!!! [Exit L. MILDRED.]

JUDGE. [Genial to POLLY] Not yet married, my dear?

POLLY. [Glances at DICK—giggles—stammers] Oh, Judge!

JUDGE. [Beaming upon this indication of youthful attachment] I dare say you have meditated matrimony. Have you chosen the man? [Teasing] Eh, Richard, has Polly chosen the man?

DICK. [Grins] By advice of counsel, your honor, I decline to answer.

JUDGE. Ha! Ha! Ha! [To POLLY] Look carefully before you leap, my dear. How old are you now?

POLLY. I shall be eighteen, sir next April.

JUDGE. At least wait until you are twenty. An impetuous pair of youngsters in my native town ran away in October and were married. Last week it became my painful duty to sentence the youthful

bridegroom to a term in the penitentiary.

DICK. [*In a cold perspiration*] The penitentiary!

POLLY. [*Hastily concealing ring*] Is it a crime to elope?

JUDGE. Under ordinary circumstances, no. Unfortunately this young girl who, like yourself, had not completed her eighteenth year, married in the face of violent family opposition. Her father laid the matter before the District Attorney.

DICK. [*In collapse*] This is my honeymoon.

JUDGE. [*Placidly*] Here in New York State, I believe, ten years is the maximum penalty for the offence.

DICK. [*Hollow voice, to POLLY*] Ten years! I shall be thirty-one.

JUDGE. [*Placidly*] One-third off, of course, for good behavior.

DICK. One-third off: every little counts.

[Enter L. MILDRED.]

MILDRED. Take Dick away, Polly, and let me have father all to myself. I'll call you directly tea is served.

POLLY. [*Going—coquettish*] Or, if you wish to be very nice, you might even send us our tea in the billiard room. Come, Dicky.

DICK. Bread and water for me, please. I expect to be placed on a diet shortly.

[Exit L. POLLY and DICK.]

MILDRED [*Cuddling the JUDGE*] A button missing! Spots on your coat! [Softly] Daddy, I should like to return home and keep house for you.

JUDGE. [*Benignly*] Faithless little wife, would you sacrifice your husband upon the altar of filial affection?

MILDRED. [*Nerving herself*] You may as well hear the worst. Mr. Barwell has lost his money. This

house is to be given up. George has the promise of a government post in the tropics. What is to become of me?

JUDGE. My child, what becomes of any true woman, whose husband meets with reverses? Go with George. Share his poverty, as you have already partaken of his abundance. Help him to economize.

MILDRED. [Lightly] The blind leading the blind. [Obstinately] Suppose I announce that I am determined to return home with you.

JUDGE. [Raising an admonishing hand] No, no, daughter. Your father has a few drops of your own blood in his veins. Go with George. If you say *won't*, I may say *must*; then we shall disagree. [Gently] Do your duty bravely and I will make you a yearly allowance of five hundred dollars, with which you can at least provide suitable clothing for the children and yourself—

MILDRED. [Shrug] Possibly, sir—in the tropics.

JUDGE. [Card case out] Do you need money? No? Oh, [Produces Lincoln letter] Your cousin, Sabina, sent this to you with her best love.

MILDRED. Thank you. [Takes letter listlessly without looking at it.]

JUDGE. To add to your collection of autograph letters, my dear. One cannot possess too many specimens of the handwriting of that great man.

MILDRED. [Absently] What great man?

JUDGE. [Directing her attention] Abraham Lincoln, my dear.

MILDRED. [Starts—looks at letter] So it is. [Bitterly] I am very glad you do not entrust *your* Lincoln letters to the mails, sir. [Kindly] Poor Sabina. Why permit her to squander her little income on such trifles?

JUDGE. It cost her nothing. Sabina found this

letter.

MILDRED. [Attention riveted] Found it! Where?

JUDGE. In your mother's old work table in the attic, my dear, together with several letters written in a crabbed, lawyer-like hand, part of which Sabina deciphered with extreme difficulty. [Chuckles] Letters, it would seem, from a person of a sentimental turn of mind. I can't imagine where your mother found them. [MILDRED sits gazing fixedly at the Lincoln letter which she holds in a hand that trembles slightly] Why so thoughtful, daughter?

MILDRED. [Determined, raises eyes to his] Once more, sir, will you take me home with you? [Burst of anguish] Father, father, let me return home. I am so tired of it all. Oh, Daddy, sometimes I think you are the only man for whom I have ever really and truly cared.

JUDGE. [Sternly] Mildred, you married George for better, for worse.

MILDRED. [Aside, casting the die] For worse, then, be it. [Places Lincoln letter in bosom of gown, sits at table, rings for KELLY, writes.] [To JUDGE, laughing hysterically] Upon your return home, sir, read those letters. You will find them most amusing. Unless I am greatly mistaken, they were written to me many years ago.

JUDGE. Ah, that explains how they came to be in the possession of your mother.

[Enter C. R. KELLY.]

MILDRED. [Quietly, finishing note] Yes, that explains everything. Kelly, I fancy Senator Herington is to be found either at his hotel or at Mr. Carter's house.

KELLY. Yes'm.

MILDRED. [Seals note and hands it to KELLY] Deliver this note to him in person; [Emphasizing] in

person and immediately.

KELLY. [Going] Directly, ma'm.

[Enter C. R. BARWELL.]

BAR. [Up C., calling off R] This way, Senator, if you please.

[Enter C. R. HERINGTON.]

HER. [Ignores others—to BARWELL in official tone] Have you no room in which we can be alone?

BAR. We'll be alone here in about twenty seconds. [X and shakes hands with JUDGE.]

JUDGE. [Cordial] Glad to see you, George.

BAR. Thanks. Judge Platt, I make you acquainted with Senator Herington. [HERINGTON stiffly and JUDGE cordially shake hands] [BARWELL comes down to MILDRED, furious aside] That idiot Herington has thrown me down. Is this your work?

MILDRED. Don't be absurd.

BAR. I met him on the street and he attempted to pass without bowing—

[BARWELL turns to X back to JUDGE. Meanwhile KELLY has been furtively mancuvring to deliver MILDRED'S note to HERINGTON, the latter having retired up stage after chatting for a moment with the JUDGE. MILDRED, who while talking aside with BARWELL, has kept an anxious eye on KELLY, now fears that BARWELL will detect KELLY in the act of handing her letter to HERINGTON.]

MILDRED. [Calls sharply, as BARWELL turns to X to JUDGE] Kelly, come here.

[BARWELL, detecting note of warning in her voice, abruptly faces up stage and watches KELLY slink away from HERINGTON.]

KELLY. Yes'm. [Goes down to MILDRED.]

MILDRED. [Aside to KELLY, steadying her voice] You may return the note to me. [KELLY furtively obeys. BARWELL has an eye on him] [Placing note in

bosom of gown, aloud to KELLY] Serve tea as soon as possible——

BAR. [Near JUDGE] Not here. I need this room——

JUDGE. [Mildly hurt, rises] Shall I withdraw?

BAR. [Curt] If you please. [Calls] Kelly. [KELLY X reluctantly to BARWELL. MILDRED X to JUDGE] [Aloud] Show Judge Platt to his room. [Aside] Who gave you that letter?

KELLY. [Wavering] Letter, sir?

BAR. [Appealing to KELLY'S loyalty] Kelly.

KELLY. [Reluctantly] Mrs. Barwell, sir, for the Senator.

BAR. Ah! [Roughly, to cover] Don't stand here like a dummy. Show Judge Platt to his room. [MILDRED has been assisting JUDGE to replace odds and ends in grip; she now starts to accompany him out of room. BARWELL silently seizes her wrist and detains her. JUDGE seeing nothing of this, exits C. R., followed by KELLY. HERINGTON sees BARWELL'S action, makes two steps forward to assist MILDRED, then halts.] [BARWELL drags MILDRED down stage] What game are you playing? For some reason, you wish to prevent me from going to Guatama. Let me see that letter——

MILDRED. [Struggling] George!

BAR. [To HERINGTON] A moment ago you gave me notice that I must not look to you for support in Washington. My wife put you up to this.

HER. [Promptly] She did not.

BAR. [Suspiciously] If there is no double dealing, why are letters passing between you two?

HER. [Fling at MILDRED] Mrs. Barwell will assure you that I have never written her a line in my life——

BAR. [Brusquely] That may be, but Mrs. Barwell gave my man a letter to place in your hands——

[HERINGTON hesitates, fearing he may make a false move] She has it now in the bosom of her gown——

MILDRED [Sees a way out] Oh, that letter! Ha! Ha! Ha! George, you are absurdly melodramatic. That letter you may have and welcome. [Produces Lincoln letter from bosom of gown.]

MILDRED. [Eyes on HERINGTON] Read the letter aloud, George, if it is not too much trouble——
[Hands letter to BARWELL.]

BAR. [Cynical chuckle] No trouble, I assure you.
[Opens and reads] "Gardner Graham, Esq., 5 Nassau Street, New York City."

HER. [Recognizing name] Gardner Graham! [Exchanges glances with MILDRED.]

BAR. [Puzzled] His son was one of my ushers. Why confound it, Mildred, this letter is a hundred years old. [Reads] Signed, A. Lincoln. [Disgusted] Oh, Hell! Whose is this? Yours or his?

MILDRED. [Explaining] A letter, written by Mr. Lincoln, once came into the possession of Senator Herington.

[BARWELL, puzzled, turns to HERINGTON for confirmation.]

HER. [Cautiously] Quite true: so I informed your wife at lunch time.

MILDRED. That letter was lost.

HER. [Coldly assenting] Lost in the mails, as I have been given to understand.

MILDRED. Ten minutes ago, my father placed this letter in my hands. [Unguardedly to HERINGTON] It has lain in my mother's work table all these years.

BAR. [Sharply] All what years?

MILDRED. [Catching herself] All these years, since my mother placed it in her work table. [Tenders letter to HERINGTON] Will you permit me to offer you this to replace the letter which was lost?

BAR. [Gratified aside] Clever move, little woman.

HER. [Coldly] Thank you, Mrs. Barwell, I am no longer interested in autograph letters. [To BARWELL] Shall we resume our discussion? I believe you had an object in asking me to return to this house—

BAR. What is there to discuss? Either you stand by me or you throw me over. Herington, my wife will be deeply mortified if this appointment slips through my fingers.

MILDRED. [Significant glance at BARWELL] May I not speak for myself?

BAR. [Takes hint] Suppose you do. I'll run upstairs and make sure that the Judge is comfortable.

HER. [Distressed] Mr. Barwell—

BAR. [Genial] Help yourself to the brandy and a segar, old chap. Be back in two minutes. [Exit R.]

[HERINGTON passive. MILDRED follows BARWELL to door R., then turns, all emotion.]

MILDRED. [Expectantly] Have you nothing to say to me now?

HER. Not a word.

MILDRED. [Approaching] I did write you a note a few moments ago.

HER. That was a very silly thing to do.

MILDRED. [From this point grows worried] Shall I tell you what that note contained? It is very brief. [Takes note from bosom.]

HER. [Formal] If you will be so good.

MILDRED. [Reads] "Come back. All is explained. Forgive me and forget my words." [Looks up longingly] That was all.

HER. [Unmoved] That was enough to incriminate a dozen women.

MILDRED. Your letters were suppressed by my mother.

HER. So I infer. [*X to her. She ready to receive his embraces, but he stops and puts out hand for note*] Permit me, [*Tears up note, throwing pieces in fire*] to place your letter in the fire for safe-keeping.

MILDRED. [Reproachful] You are determined to quarrel with me? [Appealing] Why render our reconciliation so difficult? Must you humble me to the dust? [Softly] Forgive me, Jack.

HER. [Coldly] You are forgiven.

MILDRED. [Ready for his embraces] Well, then? [Haughtily, for an instant] Am I to come to you?

HER. [Gravely] Shall we not confine our conversation to the Guatama appointment?

MILDRED. [Passion] What is that to me, save as a means to an end? Give George what he wants. Let him set out at once.

HER. [Coldly] Alone?

MILDRED. Alone? Yes. Jack, let me become your wife. Let me be to you all that I might have been these past ten years.

HER. Unfortunately we have grown ten years older during the past decade.

MILDRED. [Reading the truth] It is you! You, who have changed.

HER. [Sadly and quietly] Not I, Mildred. I have long worshipped the memory of an old love, a mere shadow, perhaps, yet inexpressibly sweet. We met. Momentarily I confused the substance with the shadow. You soon opened my eyes. You have changed.

MILDRED. [Exculpating herself] I was wild—wild with jealous pain. [Impulsively moves toward him] Jack, don't turn from me.

HER. [Coldly raises cautioning hand] Your husband is in the house.

MILDRED. No one can hear what we are saying.

[DICK'S head through curtains in door L.]

DICK. [Abruptly] Don't be too sure of that. [Enters] I say, Mildred, Polly is both hungry and cross. Can't something be done about it?

MILDRED. Go and tell Kelly to make haste. Everybody is starving.

DICK. [Gratefully] May I? Thanks, very much. It will be a great relief. [Exit C. L.]

MILDRED. [Comes very close to HERINGTON, voice low] No one can hear what we are saying.

HER. [Refuses to negotiate] Perhaps I had better leave the house.

MILDRED. [Lays hand on his arm] And desert me? Is this, then, the end of everything?

HER. [Soothing] Steady, Mildred, steady. Remember your father and your children.

MILDRED. My father may thank his wife for what has come to pass. As for my children, they care nothing for Mr. Barwell. Can anything be more utterly demoralizing to a child, than to be brought up in a household where the parents incessantly quarrel?

HER. Better so, than to be abandoned by their mother.

MILDRED. [Frightened] You would not ask me to go away without my children?

HER. My friend, it is not what you and I arrange. The courts have an unsympathetic habit of awarding the custody of the children to the deserted parent.

MILDRED. No matter how guilty the husband may have been?

HER. No matter how guilty the husband may be in the eyes of the wife who has eloped.

[Enter R. BARWELL on the cue "eloped" and remains standing in the portieres, watching. DICK bus-

tles on C. L., carrying a plate of cakes, comes down a step, then sees his brother and halts to watch developments.]

MILDRED. [Going all to pieces, hand on HERINGTON'S arm, subdued voice] I will not give up, I will not abandon hope. You shall not go, until some definite understanding has been reached. Oh, be merciful. Love means so much to a woman. There are worse fates than to be known as the heroine of an elopement.

BAR. [Comes down, studying MILDRED's face with savage contempt] It takes all kinds to make a world.

HER. [Drawn into the situation] Address your remarks to me, if you please—

BAR. [Insolently] All in good time, Senator Herington, and not by mail. [Turns on MILDRED] You treacherous devil, digging a pit beneath my feet, ready to steal your friend's fiancée. [DICK comes out from curtains C.] Go to your room.

DICK. Now, then, what's the row this time? George, you shan't ill-treat Mildred in my presence.

BAR. [Earnest aside to DICK] Did you overhear any part of their conversation?

DICK. [After a reassuring glance at MILDRED, lies cheerfully] I did. Every blessed word.

BAR. [Sneer] Well, what do you think of your sweet sister-in-law, now?

DICK. [Aloud] She's the finest girl on earth—
[Enter L. POLLY] Bar one.

POLLY. That came just in the nick of time, Richard. [Pounces on cake] Cake! Oh, I am so hungry.

BAR. [To DICK, seeking support] She was pleading with him—her hand rested on his arm—I caught the word elopement.

DICK. [Non-committal] What else?

BAR. Look at the expression on each face. What

else do you wish to know?

DICK. [X to POLLY, aside] Polly, can you lie?

POLLY. [Munching cake amiably] I can try.

DICK. Back me up. [X to MILDRED and faces BARWELL] Yes, I heard Mildred—heard her plead as only a woman can plead for one she loves and I know for whom she was pleading.

BAR. [Growls] You can tell your story in court, young man.

DICK. I thank you, Mildred, for your efforts on my behalf. [To BARWELL] Mildred is well aware that I stand in danger of serving a term in the penitentiary for that which I have done to-day. She undertook to induce Senator Herington to secure my pardon from the Carters. [Elated with his felicity at lying, he pauses to enquire] Am I stating the facts, correctly?

[HERINGTON and MILDRED too nearly stumped to reply.]

POLLY. [Half consumed cake in hand] You are. Ten years, with something off; I forget what.

BAR. [Surly] I don't believe a word of this rigmarole.

DICK. [Bullying the bully] Don't you dare give me the lie. I am twenty years your junior and a better man than you ever were at my age. [Returns to MILDRED] Again I thank you, Mildred. Senator, I know that you will do your utmost to placate the Carters— [Abruptly to BARWELL] Polly and I were married at half-past three this afternoon.

BAR. You married to that slip of a girl? It's an abduction and a criminal offence.

POLLY. [Frightened] No, no, no, Dick; don't tell anybody. They shall not arrest him—I did it all myself—

DICK. [Waving paper in BARWELL'S face] Here is

the marriage certificate. Arrest and be damned!

MILDRED. [Grateful tears; clasping DICK's hand]
Polly, you have won a thoroughbred—

CURTAIN.

FOURTH ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE: *Same as Act III.*

TIME: 10 P. M., *same day.*

[POLLY enters C. R., nose in air, followed by DICK remonstrating.]

POLLY. You are extremely rude.

DICK. I detest frisky young matrons. To-night it is Jimmy Williams. Who will it be to-morrow?

POLLY. [Innocently] I don't know. [Sits on table, swinging feet. Coaxing] Dicky, come here.

DICK. [Gruff] Someone might catch me kissing you.

POLLY. [Pouts] Before our marriage, you were willing to run the risk.

DICK. [Growling] A fellow has to take chances sometimes.

POLLY. It was nicer not being married.

DICK. Pity you didn't find that out before. [Enter C. R. JIMMY WILLIAMS, moustache waxed, etc.]

J. w. Most depressing dinner party I ever attended. Half the guests acted as though they were quite ready to eat up the other half.

POLLY. [To J. w.—for DICK's benefit] It has been a delightful evening.

J. w. [Complacently] I sat at your right hand.

POLLY. Mr. Serrano sat on my left. He asked me to marry him twice—

DICK. Once is enough for most men.

J. w. [Complaining] Serrano was favored with

rather more than a fair share of Miss Polly's attention.

DICK. [Sputtering to POLLY] You treat men altogether too well.

POLLY. You two are simply the limit. Am I to conduct myself like a nun at a dinner party?

J. W. [Vacuous] I don't know. How does a nun conduct herself at a dinner party?

[Enter C. R. SERRANO.]

POLLY. Mr. Serrano, by any chance, are you still in a good humor?

SERRANO. [Exaggerated manner] I have received a message from home which has transported me to the seventh heaven of delight.

POLLY. [Making eyes, to punish DICK] A message from one you love?

SERRANO. [Requires no further invitation] I love no one at home, Miss Polly. My heart, I brought with me inviolate. [Getting close to the child, he gives her a creepy feeling] But, I have lost it during the past few hours.

DICK. [Restraining himself with difficulty] I say, Serrano, remember there is a lady present.

J. W. [Also incensed] Quite so: I don't wish to appear prudish, but—

SERRANO. [Aside to J. W.] Tush! The man who knows how, can say anything to a woman.

POLLY. [Penitent, has X quickly to DICK] Oh, Dicky, that creature is disgusting. [DICK pats her hand soothingly] Thank you, dear, don't scold; I'll be good.

DICK. [Chummy, going L. with POLLY] What do you say to a short game of billiards?

POLLY. [Saccharine] The game will seem short in your company, Richard.

[Exit L. POLLY and DICK.]

SERRANO. [Blandly] Does the bewitching Miss inherit much money from papa?

J. w. Not one penny.

SERRANO. [Sighs] Alas! Then she is not for me.

[BARWELL appears through curtains R and indicates that he expects someone to follow him.]

BAR. [Coming down] Jimmy, the ladies request a song.

J. w. [Briskly] I am pining to sing for them.
[Going C.] Won't you join us?

BAR. [Declining] Distance lends enchantment.

[Exit C. R. J. w.]

SERRANO. [Excitedly producing telegram] A cablegram forwarded to me from my hotel. [Reads] "Guatama, 7.45 P. M. Money removed from vaults as requested" [Aloud] Signed, Emilio, my cousin. Ha! Ha!

BAR. [Cynic] By industry we thrive. [HERINGTON appears R. and halts] [Patting SERRANO on back and driving him up C.] Your talents are wasted in Guatama, Serrano. New York affords special inducements to men of your calibre.

[Exit C. R. SERRANO.]

HER. You signalled me to follow you?

BAR. Yes. Senator, it was extremely gracious of you to permit my wife to persuade you to come here to-night, in spite of my foolish flare-up this afternoon. No hard feelings, I hope—

HER. None, Mr. Barwell.

BAR. [Pleading] Herington, your decision was not irrevocable? You will do what you can for me in Washington?

HER. I can do nothing.

BAR. I'll be frank. The loss of this appointment may make a difference of thousands to me. [HERINGTON impassive] Hundreds of thousands! [BAR-

WELL X to HERINGTON and in low voice] I shouldn't expect to keep all the plunder.

HER. [Starting back in a rage] Mr. Barwell—
[Checks himself] What you ask will shortly be beyond my power.

BAR. Don't talk rubbish.

HER. [Gravely] Circumstances have so shaped themselves that I am about to resign my seat in the Senate—

[BARWELL dumfounded—then great light breaks in upon him.]

BAR. Phew! So you have troubles of your own? [Offensive sympathy] I'm sorry, old fellow. I wish I could help you.

HER. [Boiling within] Thank you.

[Enter C. R. MILDRED—She is the radiant hostess—No trace left of the moody, passionate woman of Act III. Every care carefully concealed. Her gown is too low. Her aigrette rather too rakish.]

MILDRED. [To BARWELL] Your father's carriage is here. Mr. Barwell wishes to see you at the house at once.

BAR. [Lightly] Tell father to go to—bed.

MILDRED. [Smiling good humoredly] Would you mind delivering your own message to the footman.

BAR. [Amiably, going] I wonder what the old man thinks he wants. [Aside] I say, Herington, apropos. My dad's influence in Washington is extensive and peculiar. I shouldn't mind asking him to assist a friend, you know, though I'll see him *pickled* before I accept favors for myself. Would you be willing to reciprocate? If father can be persuaded to do Red Cross work on your behalf, will you see me through? [HERINGTON remains mute] Think it over, Herington. A fair exchange is no robbery. Father can deliver the goods. [Exit C. R.]

MILDRED. [Going] Damon and Pythias! Such a display of friendship is really most touching.

HER. Don't run away, Mildred— [Perfunctorily detains her hand.]

MILDRED. [Smilingly withdraws hand] My dear boy, I can't desert my guests without exciting comment.

HER. [Mirthless laugh] Yet you are prepared to take a step which will be talked about from Maine to California.

MILDRED. [Playful vanity] How flattering to think that my actions should arouse such widespread interest. [Checking herself] Oh, you mean that our affairs will be widely discussed, because you happen to be a Senator?

HER. [Verge of being bored] I meant nothing. Within forty-eight hours I shall have ceased to be a Senator.

MILDRED. [Touched] You are resigning office, Jack, on my account? My dear, no woman is worth this sacrifice.

HER. [Gravely—no enthusiasm] Let me be the judge of that.

MILDRED. [Displeased with his cold manner] If you resign, what then?

HER. I shall return home—

MILDRED. For the moment, yes. After the divorce?

HER. [Impassive] We shall marry and live happily, I hope—

MILDRED. [Sceptic] In Dakota?

HER. Where else? We must live where I can earn a living.

[MILDRED'S face expressive of amusement. Enter C. R., on their way to billiard room, VON ULM, SER-RANO and CARTER. The foreigners prove too much for the latter. In his efforts to be attentive to MRS.

BARWELL *he finds himself constantly elbowed out of the way.]*

VON ULM. [R. of MILDRED] We go to play at billiards, madam.

SERRANO. [L. of MILDRED] Your presence will inspire us.

VON ULM. Will Mrs. Barwell condescend to take a cue?

CARTER. [Running around in effort to get near her] As your partner, Mrs. Barwell, I feel that I shall accomplish wonders.

VON ULM No, no, that would be unjust
SERRANO [Together] Become my partner, I beg.

[They buzz about MILDRED. She is radiant. HERINGTON stands coldly aloof, as she fairly thrives on adulation. Off R. JIMMY WILLIAMS strikes a few chords.]

MILDRED. [Vanity] Embarras de richesse. [Teaching HERINGTON a lesson, turns impersonally to all] I cannot choose a partner where so many have equal claims. You shall make me your referee.

[Off R., J. W. breaks into a rollicking song. Exit L. MILDRED, VON ULM, SERRANO with CARTER tagging behind. HERINGTON stands bitterly observant; then turns with a shrug and slowly paces up stage, hands behind his back. POLLY and DICK bustle on L. Hearing them, HERINGTON halts. J. W. finishes verse.]

DICK. [Disgruntled] Hang it, Polly, the men follow you everywhere.

POLLY. [Saucy] That's what the men are for, Richard, dear. [To HERINGTON] We have been making friends after our first quarrel. It is rather good fun.

DICK. I say, Senator, have you announced our marriage to your future better half?

HER. [Starts] To whom? [Confused] Oh, yes.

No, I have not. I'll explain matters to Madge at once. [*Exit C. R.*]

DICK. [Watching him] There goes a cheerful lover. Did you notice his face?

POLLY. [Calmly] Diabetes, I fancy. [Throws window curtains back, showing moonlight outside. Tree with branches laden with snow and ice, etc. Window seat practical.] Shall we sit here?

DICK. I don't mind. [Strips room of sofa cushions, tossing them one by one to POLLY, who stows them away on the window seat in a most workmanlike manner. As they get settled down in window, enter L. CARTER, disgruntled.]

CARTER. [Calls off L. through portieres] I shan't play. The light hurts my eyes. [Comes down with a grievance] Thanks to those foreigners, one cannot get a word in edgeways with Mrs. Barwell.

[A kiss from the window is distinctly audible. CARTER looks slowly and suspiciously toward door L.]

POLLY. [Peeping out with DICK] Peek-a-boo, papa!

CARTER. [Both relieved and annoyed] Oh! [Frowns] You two tête-a-tête? Madge will scold.

POLLY. [Comes down, with DICK] Madge gets on my nerves.

CARTER. [Thoughtlessly] Mine, too. [Pulls up reprovingly] Hem! Pauline!

POLLY. [Feeling ground] The lady will drive me into a runaway match, some day, papa. See if she doesn't.

DICK. [Aside] Easy, Polly: the old man may smell a rat.

CARTER. [Chuckles] Richard, you shouldn't put such lawless ideas in my girl's head.

DICK. [Innocently] I, sir? Could you endure me as a son-in-law, Mr. Carter?

CARTER. [Resigned air] I am learning to accept the sons-in-laws my daughters thrust upon me.

POLLY. One thing I promise, papa. My husband shall be a New York man.

CARTER. [Heartfelt] I hope so.

DICK. Hear! Hear! I am a New York man.

POLLY. [Coaxing CARTER] When I am married, will you come and make your home with me?

CARTER. [Hastily] Will I? [Regains dignity] Your father will never be guilty of abandoning his youngest child.

POLLY. In my house, there shall be no restrictions.

CARTER. Good!

POLLY. [To CARTER only] You shall have a latch key.

CARTER. Capital!

POLLY. Keep late hours and positively no questions asked next morning.

CARTER. [Captivated] Home, sweet home, after a lapse of seven years. [Face falls] You may marry a serious minded young person.

DICK. If Polly marries me, sir, you shall have no cause to complain of the Puritan habits of your son-in-law.

POLLY. [Decidedly] Where thou goest, there I go too, Dicky dear.

CARTER. [Amused] My dear, you already express yourself with the uncharitable inflexibility of the average wife.

POLLY. [Seizing opportunity] Father, I am a wife. This afternoon Richard and I were—

CARTER. [Panic] Hush! Stop! Don't! I didn't hear you. I don't wish to hear you. Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to fight other people's battles. [Low voice, winking] Your sister-in-law does not cotton to you, Richard.

DICK. [Grins] Well, scarcely, papa.

CARTER. [Kissing POLLY] Take a poor man's blessing [Henpecked snivel] for what it is worth. [Going C.] Mum's the word. Here comes our critic with her cowboy sweetheart.

POLLY. [To DICK] Shall we stand our ground?

DICK. [Wavering] Too many cooks spoil the broth. Herington is on the job. [Pulls POLLY laughingly into window and closes curtains. CARTER stands up C. defiant as a bantam rooster. Enter C. R. MADGE and HERINGTON.]

HER. [Genially] Well met, Mr. Carter. I have a romantic story to unfold.

CARTER. [Pompous] Mr. Herington, through no fault of mine, you are about to enter my family. I permit no one in my household to snub me at five and pat me on the back at ten. [Exits C. R.]

MADGE. [Smilingly] Father begins to show his age. [Consulting clock] I must gather up Polly and wend my homeward way.

[DICK and POLLY show heads R. and L. side of window.]

HER. Before you go, I have something of real importance to tell you.

[DICK and POLLY exchange glances and their heads disappear.]

MADGE. [Self conscious] Not here, Jack. Come home with us. It is not so very late.

HER. Polly wishes me to intercede—

MADGE. [Parenthetically] Polly behaved very badly this afternoon; however, let bygones be bygone. [Point blank] Why do you ignore my suggestion? Won't you come in for half an hour?

-HER. [Bitterly but steadily] The less we see of one another henceforth the better for your reputation.

MADGE. [Reproachfully] You have again yielded to this weakness?

HER. [Head high] Weakness? Would you have me turn my back upon a woman who loves me and has loved me for years? If she needs me, I must remain at her side. [Warmly] But it is only fair that you should know—— [She turns abruptly away] Before I leave you to-night you shall hear—— [She faces him reproachfully] I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to be rough. It is only this. No matter what may happen, Madge, believe me, I honor and respect you above all women.

MADGE. [Reserved] Thank you. A man can pay a woman no greater compliment.

HER. [Pacing the room] To-day I met Mildred. My first love stood before me. For a moment it seemed that I had drunk of the fountain of youth. But she is not the sweet, ingenuous girl, the Mildred of my dreams: it is Mildred of the vintage of 1907 a woman of the world, worldly, a worldling to her finger tips, unhappily married *of course*—they always are. For what her love *once* meant to me, I shall stand by her through thick and thin: yet by no process of self deception can I bring myself to believe that the old days will ever return.

MADGE. [Going] You must be the judge of your own actions.

HER. One word more. After to-night, should we meet, you may cut me—you *must* cut me. I'll take my medicine like a man.

MADGE. [Horrified] You are not taking her away to-night?

HER. [Indifferent] Probably not. I don't know, I'm sure. [Bracing up] Believe me, Madge, I am neither vicious, nor an amorous fool. What I do, is done with my eyes wide open—for the sake of auld

lang syne.

MADGE. [Losing reserve] And in this spirit of Quixotism you are willing to deceive Mildred, to offer in place of home and children, the husk, the shell, the empty something which was once a heart?

HER. [Quiet force] And is a heart, Madge; at this moment beating high and warm for another woman. [Slowly lifts and kisses her hand.]

MADGE. [Sadly] Poor Mildred.

HER. [Doggedly] Have no fear. Mildred shall never learn the truth.

MADGE. As though a man can deceive a woman, unless she wishes to be deceived! [In anxiety to save MILDRED, casts aside her own reserve] Jack, will you spare Mildred if—if the other woman confesses that she cares for you?

HER. [Sad smile] Ah, no, old lady: that won't do. The other woman has already given me to understand that she does not love me. If one of us is to be sacrificed, it shall not be you.

[Exit C. R. HERINGTON. Enter R. J. w. in time to note HERINGTON's retreating figure.]

J. w. [Cheers up at the sight] Far be it from me to profit by another man's misfortunes, but—Have I a chance?

MADGE. Faithful Jimmy.

J. w. No go, eh? Very well, don't blame me if, hereafter, my conduct becomes grossly irregular.

MADGE. [Soothing] Listen, Jimmy, if it is any satisfaction to you. I am very fond of Mr. Herington—

J. w. Don't rub it in.

MADGE. [Continuing] But I shall never marry him.

J. w. What! Well, I am not surprised. Lots of girls get engaged to the wrong man once or twice

before making permanent arrangements. [*Politely amorous*] Let me again urge you to marry me—
[She shakes head] Don't be pig headed. Some women find matrimony immensely attractive.

MADGE. [*Equally polite*] None for me, I thank you.

J. w. [*Pleading*] What have I not given up for your sake? Bad habits, bad hours, bad company. Marry me, Madge. That's a nice girl.

MADGE. [*As though refusing candy to a baby*] No, Jimmy, no.

J. w. [*Ray of human intelligence*] By Jove, there is another, after all.

MADGE. [*Sob in throat*] There is another. [*Going R.*]

J. w. [*Placidly*] I pity you with all my heart. [She looks back enquiringly] You are accustomed to my ways. It may take you years to accommodate yourself to the habits of another man—

[*Exit R.* MADGE and J. w.]

[POLLY and DICK, with pale faces, emerge from window.]

POLLY. Dick it's dreadful. I won't believe my ears. Poor Mildred.

DICK. Herington is a fine fellow. You must keep out of this. [X to door L. and peremptorily calls off] Mildred, may I see you at once? [To POLLY] Trot into the billiard room, Polly and detain those two foreigners.

POLLY. [*Obediently*] Yes, Richard.

DICK. [*Jealous*] You needn't go out of your way, you know, to make yourself too agreeable.

POLLY. [*Meekly*] I understand, Richard—

[MILDRED saunters on L., holding cue in hand.]

DICK. [*Dignity*] Leave us, Polly. [X and holds open curtains L.]

[Polly, her face expressing sympathy and misery, impulsively kisses MILDRED and exits L. DICK very exact about closing curtains; then turns frowning upon MILDRED.]

MILDRED. [Smiling, in response to DICK'S frown] Positively you make my blood run cold. Don't lecture me to-night, Dick. Come and lunch with me to-morrow.

DICK. [Sternly] Sit down.

MILDRED. [Smile loses spontaneity] My fatal good nature. [Sits, carefully arranging skirt for long session.]

DICK. [Brutal directness] Senator Herington no longer loves you.

MILDRED. [Rises abruptly] I forbid you to use such language.

DICK. [Dominating] Sit down. [She continues standing] Sit down. [She flinches and sinks in chair.] [Kindly] I am only your brother-in-law, Mildred, but I love you as dearly as ever a boy loved his own sister, and I say to you in all friendliness, this damnfoolishness must stop.

MILDRED. [Haughtily] Or?

DICK. Or, I shall go direct to the Judge.

MILDRED. [Appalled] To my father?

DICK. It is up to me to save the ship. If I call in assistance, you have only yourself to blame.

MILDRED. [Hesitating] What do you wish me to do?

DICK. Give Herington his marching orders. [She is stubborn] Send him back to the woods. Why, Mildred, you don't mean to say that you really care for this man?

MILDRED. [Frivols to hide emotion] Who knows?

DICK. [Immensely relieved] I thought so. It's nothing more serious than one of your innumerable

flirtations. [Laughing] Poor devil, he takes you seriously. Fancy Mrs. George Barwell looking twice at a chap who was not tremendously smart. Herington is just a plain man without any frills.

MILDRED. [Assents] Just a plain man. The frills refreshingly absent; different in every respect from the men by whom I am surrounded. [Rises and takes a long breath] I am ready and willing to pull up stakes and leave this tiresome city behind me.

DICK. Don't slander little old New York. What would you find to do in the country?

MILDRED. [Theatrical] One can always die.

DICK. [Heartlessly] You'll die right here in town, if you live long enough. [Pleading] Mildred, I shan't urge you to renounce Herington on the ground that it is wrong to do otherwise. That argument cuts no ice nowadays. Nor because you are my brother's wife and incidentally the mother of a bouncing brace of kids in the nursery overhead. [She winces] [Apologetic] I beg your pardon. I don't wish to be offensive.

MILDRED. [Tapping ground with foot] Go on, by all means.

DICK. [Continues, trying new line] I appeal to you as a good sport to extend fair treatment to a chap who is game to the core. Don't spoil his life. Show your sporting blood. Although he is in love with Madge Carter—

MILDRED. [Fiercely] Who says that Senator Herington is in love with Madge?

DICK. I say so. I overheard their farewell conversation. He stands ready to sacrifice everything, because he believes that you love and need him.

MILDRED. [Defiantly] I do. [Dick eyes her with silent amusement, throwing her on the defensive] I do, indeed, Dick.

DICK. Dear old girl, don't be absurd. What could you hope to make of such a man? Sentiment is no substitute for good society. Come, you are through with him. Would you begrudge a woman your cast off clothing? Honor bright, have you ever found the same man attractive two days in succession?

MILDRED. [Wistful smile, yielding] Am I a butterfly?

DICK. The most beautiful specimen in captivity.

MILDRED. [With assumed nonchalance] No doubt I am. Very well, Madge shall have her Jack and welcome. It doesn't much matter.

[Enter R. J. w., solemnly.]

DICK. [Teasing, overjoyed at success] Jimmy is a butterfly, all right, all right. Would you believe it? He enjoyed eighteen love affairs before reaching the age of twelve?

J. W. [Testy] I suffered twelve bitter disappointments before reaching the age of eighteen. [To MILDRED] Dick is so inaccurate. [Tenders hand formally.]

MILDRED. [Conventional] Must you go?

J. W. [Intense gloom] Madge has refused me again. This time I really think she means it. [Changes to ultra conventional] Thank you so much for a delightful evening.

[OLD BARWELL heard bellowing off C. R.]

OLD BAR. [Off C. R.] Show me to a room where there are no women.

MILDRED. [Exclaims] Ah!

DICK. Father! [Going hastily L.]

J. W. The devil! [Going hastily R.]

MILDRED. [C.] Synonymous! [Following J. W., R.]

DICK. [X back to MILDRED—aside, nervous] Can

father have heard that I am married?

MILDRED. [Nervous on her own account] He hears everything.

[J. W., MILDRED and DICK going R., as OLD BARWELL hobbles in C. R., supported by KELLY and using cane vigorously.]

OLD B. [Catching sight of trio about to run away, bellows] Ah! How are yer?

[J. W., MILDRED and DICK halt abruptly; try to appear unconcerned and, facing OLD BARWELL, bow and mumble, "Good evening," "How are you, father?" "How do you do, MR. BARWELL?" etc. Meantime KELLY places rest under OLD BARWELL's bad leg, during which operation the latter growls and fumes. MILDRED attempts to assist KELLY.]

OLD B. [Growls] Will you let Kelly alone? He knows what he is about. [MILDRED back in line R. C.] [To KELLY, finally] Send my son George here at once.

KELLY. At once, sir. [Exit C. R.]

J. W. [Pretext to escape] I am positive George went in this direction. [Exit R.]

[OLD B., watching J. W., grunts.]

MILDRED. [Eager to escape] Jimmy won't know where to find him. [Exit R.]

OLD B. [Irascibly to DICK] Why don't you run away with the others?

DICK. [Keeping a stiff upper lip] All right, governor. Someone must stay and face the music.

OLD B. [Roars] Your mother delayed dinner thirty minutes on your account. It's an outrage.

DICK. [Easily] Jove, that's right. I forgot to leave word that I was dining out.

OLD B. [Bawls] What did you do with that girl?

DICK. [Innocently] What girl?

OLD B. What girl? Are you maintaining a harem

at my expense? What have you done with Carter's daughter?

DICK. [Flares up] Don't say a word against Pauline Carter, father.

OLD B. [Growls] Never heard anything in her favor, except that she inherited eighteen thousand a year from her mother.

DICK. [Furious] Stop, sir. She is my wife.

OLD B. [Surprised] What!!!. [Subsiding] Well, that's nothing in her favor.

DICK. [Proudly] We were married this afternoon.

OLD B. [Cool grin] Appearances are deceitful. So you do know which side your bread is buttered on.

DICK. Is that all you have to say?

OLD B. [Curt] That's all. You might have done worse. [Enter C. R. GEORGE BARWELL] Bring her around to-morrow in time for dinner, and we'll see what she looks like—— [Howls] In time for dinner, mind you: not thirty minutes late. [Exit R. DICK.] [Savagely to GEORGE BARWELL] Come here. You have been pulling wires to secure the Guatama appointment. Why?

BAR. [Sullen] That's my affair, sir. Have I troubled you in any way?

OLD B. [Bawls] It troubles me to find that my son is a numskull. Your bear my name. How dare you subject that name to the contempt of the business community?

BAR. Oh, fudge!

OLD B. [Yowling] I said contempt! All unsuccessful men are contemptible.

BAR. Let me alone. I am getting on my feet.

OLD B. [Contempt] Bah! Serrano hawked that scheme all over town. Do you imagine anything good is permitted to get past me?

BAR. Possibly the enterprise was too small for

you, sir.

OLD B. [*Ingenuously*] Nothing is too small for me, if there's money in it. [*Mysterious chuckle*] This man Serrano has no influence with the present government of Guatama.

BAR. His uncle is president of the Republic.

OLD B. [*Laughing offensively*] Was President, Ha! Ha! Ha! Was President. What you don't know about your own business would fill a book. His uncle's government fell [*Consults watch*] two hours and ten minutes ago.

BAR. [*Dismay*] A revolution?

OLD B. [*Winks*] The newspapers will describe it as such. Our marines were landed at eight o'clock. An American Protectorate has been declared.

[Enter L. SERRANO, excitedly displaying despatch.]

SERRANO. Barwell, Barwell, another cablegram. [Reads, OLD BARWELL chuckling meanwhile] "Guatama, 8.15 P. M. Deposed. Sailing to-morrow noon. Reserve sunny bedroom and bath, one flight up, near Union Square." [Aloud, with bent head] My uncle! Alas, our family has fallen.

OLD BAR. You hadn't far to fall, if that's any consolation.

SERRANO. [Delightedly wringing GEORGE BARWELL'S hand] My dear friend, thanks to your excellent advice, uncle and I have sixty thousand in gold with which to make a fresh start in the world.

OLD BAR. [Brandishing his stick] Get out. [SERRANO eyes him haughtily for an instant] Get out of this house. I know you by reputation—

[SERRANO cringes and slinks out C. R.]

BAR. [Can't help admiring the old fox] You knew that this was about to take place?

OLD B. [Rubbing hands] My Company will underwrite thirty million of the new bonds. Draw your

own conclusions.

BAR. [*Throws up sponge*] You win, father. That was my last card. I am down and out.

OLD B. [*Bully grown genial*] Ah, that's the way I like to hear a man talk. [Abruptly] Now I am ready to help you. Make out a schedule of your debts and call your wife. [BARWELL X R.] [Cuckles] Next time, sonny, before you bite off more than you can chew, drop in and talk it over with the old man.

BAR. [Calls off R.] Mildred. [Turns to OLD B.] You will concede, father, that Serrano told a plausible story?

[Enter R. MILDRED.]

OLD B. [Virtuously for benefit of third party] Serrano's undertaking was fraught with a degree of moral turpitude which no reputable man could for a moment countenance. [Brusque dismissal] When I want you, I'll send for you. [Exit C. R. BARWELL.] [Slowly, fixing a piercing eye on MILDRED] It is rumored at the clubs that you are dissatisfied with your husband.

MILDRED. [Quietly] Are you altogether satisfied with your son?

OLD B. [Can take as well as give] Good! So far we agree. Will you answer two questions?

MILDRED. If it suits me to do so.

OLD B. Have you consulted a lawyer?

MILDRED. I have.

OLD B. Does he advise you to divorce George?

MILDRED. Substantially, yes.

OLD B. Good. May we assume that, womanlike, you will act contrary to this excellent advice?

MILDRED. I shall not sue for a divorce, if that is what you mean.

OLD B. Good. Divorces beget bad blood.

MILDRED. [Angrily] George deserves no mercy at

my hands—

OLD B. [Diplomat] My dear, have I asked you to spare him? Make his life miserable, but don't drag the name through the courts.

MILDRED. Your precious name shall be spared.

OLD B. [Quickly and earnestly tenders hand] Is that a bargain, Mildred?

MILDRED. [Wearily taking hand] Yes, I suppose so.

OLD B. [Delighted with progress] Sit down. No, no, my dear, not so far away. [Grins] My bark is worse than my bite.

MILDRED. [Sits,—slight smile] Far worse.

OLD B. [Assenting] I am a trifle outspoken, at times. [Getting chummy] Now then, how shall we go to work to put George on his feet? After all, he is the father of my grandchildren.

MILDRED. [Bitterly] I am not likely to forget it, sir.

OLD B. For their sake we must make a man of him. [MILDRED is on verge of nervous collapse. HERINGTON is lost to her: the future is a blank. OLD BARWELL slowly touches the maternal chord.] [Gently] I am very proud of my grandchildren, Mildred.

MILDRED. [Sob in throat] Yes.

OLD B. [Handing a bank note] Give that to the boy and tell him to buy some marbles.

MILDRED. [Listlessly] Thank you.

OLD B. Is there anything I can buy the little girl?

MILDRED. [Listlessly] She wants an automobile, I believe.

OLD B. [Promptly] She shall have a touring car on Monday.

MILDRED. [Smile breaking through gloom] A toy auto, I mean: one that can be worked with her feet.

OLD B. Pshaw! That won't cost fifty dollars. [Insinuating] Last, but by no means least, what shall

we do for mama?

MILDRED. [Final burst of despair] Nothing, nothing. You don't understand me, Mr. Barwell. A bribe is quite unnecessary.

OLD B. [Soothing] There. There. Your nerves are in bad shape. You are about six minutes ahead of hysteria. No woman can live quietly with a man like George. I must furnish you with a legitimate source of excitement. [Beaming] What would you say to a few months in Vienna?

MILDRED. George has set his heart upon going to Guatama.

OLD B. My son accept a fifteen hundred dollar job in a swamp! [Confidential] Somebody's private secretary telephoned from Washington late this afternoon to enquire what it all meant. I have only to say the word, and a place as Secretary of our Austrian Embassy will be made for George.

MILDRED. [Growing enthusiastic] A season at the Austrian Court!! The most conservative society in Europe!!

OLD B. And the handsomest women in the world—but my daughter-in-law can give them cards and spades. By thunder, Mildred, we'll give those Austrians something to talk about. You shall have the finest wardrobe that money can buy.

MILDRED. [Now enraptured] I am simply wild to set out at once.

OLD B. In the autumn, when certain people call round to demand voluntary contributions to the campaign fund, I'll stipulate before subscribing that George must be transferred to the Court of St. James.

MILDRED. [Ecstatic] An official position in England!!! Oh, father Barwell, can you arrange this?

OLD B. [Benign amazement] Can I arrange this?

Why little girl, what a strange question. [Enter R. DICK on his way to billiard room] Call George and we'll close the deal at once. [Exit MILDRED C. R.] [To DICK, displaying roll of bills] Can you use a few of these?

DICK. I've never seen the time when I could do without them. [Takes money] Thank you.

OLD B. Your mother will give your wife a diamond necklace. Let the girl select it for herself. No limit.

DICK. [Gratefully] It is really very decent of you, governor, not to kick up a fuss.

OLD B. [Thoroughly approves match] Young fortune hunter!

DICK. [Distressed] Father, I beg you to believe—
[Enter C. R. MILDRED and BARWELL.]

OLD B. [To DICK] Bah! It's as easy to catch a rich wife as a poor one and the rich one will squander less money in the long run. [Exit L. DICK.]

BAR. [Up C., humble] Mildred has explained your plans. I am very grateful.

[MILDRED goes down L.]

OLD B. [R., brusque] Don't snivel, by way of expressing your gratitude. You shall have a suitable establishment, pending good behaviour. [To both] Shake hands— [BARWELL up C. hesitates, really abashed. MILDRED down L. rigid. The supreme moment has come.] [Promptly X to MILDRED] Come, come, has my time gone for nothing this evening? [Gesture toward BARWELL] Look at him. He's a handsome dog. You might go further and fare worse.

MILDRED. [Shrug, crossing the Rubicon] Since marriage is a lottery, there is every reason to believe that a second prize might be found less desirable than the first. [Extends hand to BARWELL, who X and takes it with boyish enthusiasm. OLD BARWELL

grunts and turning away, rings bell.]

BAR. [To cover emotion, turns cynically to OLD B.] Do you require me to kiss my wife?

OLD B. [Growls] Rome wasn't built in a day.

[Enter C. R. KELLY.]

MILDRED. [Calmly to BARWELL] You may kiss me. Under the circumstances, I fancy it is the proper thing to do.

[BARWELL bashfully kisses MILDRED'S cheek. A wise grin spreads over KELLY's face.]

OLD B. [Intensely gratified] Now, I'll go home and have my bad leg bandaged. [Calls] Kelly, my carriage.

KELLY. [Assisting OLD BARWELL] At the door, sir. [They go up stage.]

BAR. [Up to OLD B.] Father, my wife is a brick.

OLD B. Then deal with her hereafter on the square.

[Exit C. R., OLD B.—BARWELL and KELLY on either side.]

[Enter R. MADGE, frigid manner.]

MADGE. [Without offering hand to MILDRED.] Good night. Do come and see me.

MILDRED. [Lightly—mind on Vienna] Bring the Senator in to tea to-morrow afternoon, Madge.

MADGE. [Incensed] I am not conversant with Senator Herington's plans.

[Burst of laughter sounds off R.]

MILDRED. [Determined not to take offence] The gentleman shall speak for himself. [Calls off R.] When father finishes that story, Jack, won't you come here? [Roguishly] Madge wants you. [To MADGE] I shall expect you to pay us a visit, when we are settled in Vienna.

MADGE. [Laboring under delusion; angrily] Mildred!

MILDRED. [Comprehends] My dear, father Bar-

well is sending George and me to Vienna. [Repeats slowly and distinctly] George and me: me and George.

MADGE. [Hope springing up] You remain with George, after all?

MILDRED. [Assents nonchalantly] I stick to Georgie. Really, dear, my husband is very much like other men—only more so.

MADGE. [Joyfully incredulous] What on earth do you two expect to do in Vienna?

MILDRED. [Calmly] Quarrel and enjoy ourselves in the usual manner. [Quickly] Question for question, Madge. When do you marry Jack?

MADGE. [Soberly] Never.

MILDRED. You must enjoy long engagements.

[Enter R. HERINGTON.]

HER. [Slowly to MADGE] Well?

MILDRED. [Sprightly, to him] Quite well, thank you. Never better, in fact. Are you prepared for a riddle?

HER. [Folding arms, tinge of bitterness] I am prepared for almost anything.

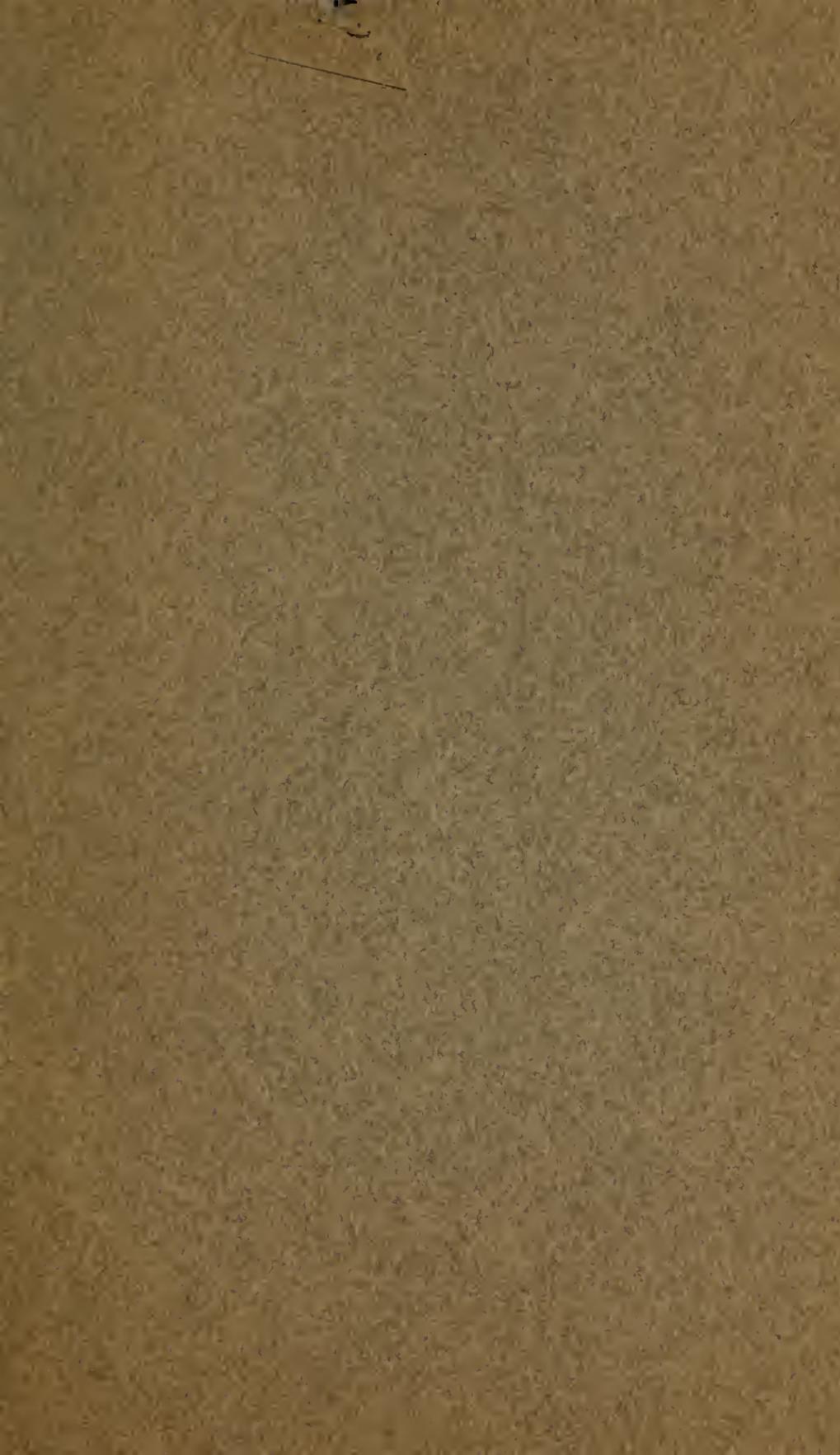
MILDRED. [Rather pleased with her new role] First, have you resigned from the Senate?

HER. [Puzzled] No, not yet.

MILDRED. Better consult Madge before taking the step. I rather think she might enjoy Washington life. [MILDRED C. beaming. HERINGTON and MADGE R. and L. awkwardly stealing glances at one another.] [Losing patience] Oh, you two stupid creatures. Can't each of you read the other's heart by the light of his own inner consciousness? [Impulsively seizes hand of each and drags them down] Now for the riddle. If one [Presses MADGE'S hand] is won: and one [Presses HERINGTON'S hand] has won her: what is to prevent one [Business with MADGE'S hand] and

one [Business with HERINGTON'S hand] from becoming and remaining one forever? [Steps back, locks their hands together, places her own hand on theirs and, with tears shining through her smiles, concludes] Exit little Mildred. Let Nature do the rest.

CURTAIN.



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